

*Speakers*  
THE LABOUR PARTY

**SPEAKERS'  
HANDBOOK**

**1948-9**

ONE SHILLING

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This Handbook was prepared by the Research Department of the Labour Party. It has been printed on paper which would otherwise have been devoted to a new edition of the Labour Party Year Book. The facts in the text are those current at the time of going to press in September 1948. In order to keep these facts up-to-date, a supplement will be published early in 1949 and supplied free of charge to purchasers of the Handbook. Those requiring copies of the supplement are asked to complete and post the form inserted at the end of the book.

# INTRODUCTION

BY MORGAN PHILLIPS

**W**E are on the threshold of a vital period for the Labour Movement and indeed for the British people as a whole. Next spring, we shall be fighting the most important local government elections in our history. In 1950, we shall be asking the nation to give its verdict on the first five years of Labour in power.

Over the last three years, we have achieved much in the face of unprecedented difficulties. We can be justly proud of our achievements. We know, and cannot too often emphasise, the value of the great measures of social and economic justice introduced by the Labour Government. But that is not enough; others must know also. We must carry the story of our achievements into every home in the land.

Our opponents will do their utmost to belittle what we have done, and to misrepresent and malign our policy. In the coming months, we may expect the national Press, so largely controlled by Tory interests, to become increasingly hostile to Labour's cause.

To meet this challenge, every Party must, without delay, bring its propaganda machine to the highest pitch of efficiency. By making the fullest use of every propaganda aid at our disposal, and especially, by means of regular and well organised meetings, both indoor and outdoor, we can make widely known the work and achievements of the Labour Government, and the enterprise and success of Labour majorities on so many local councils.

This Speakers' Handbook, primarily compiled with an eye on the local elections of 1949, can be of inestimable value in the task ahead. It provides abundant evidence of Labour's fitness to govern wisely and justly, to build the security of our people, guard their health, guarantee their jobs, build their homes, distribute fairly the things essential to living, and to lay down the foundations of a Socialist way of life which will ensure a happier and worthier existence for everyone of us.

# HOUSING

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- 2 THE TORY RECORD
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## The Housing Programme

The wartime Coalition Government estimated that in 1945 the number of houses required to give each family that wanted one a separate home was 750,000. By the autumn of 1948, this number of additional homes will have been provided. The total at the end of June 1948 was 728,777, and the monthly rate was over 25,000. Three quarters of a million was an under-estimate; but the Coalition target will, in fact, be hit this autumn.

The Labour Government is attacked both for building houses and for not building them.

*. . . in the country as a whole the Tories have been running two horses at once. Their tame economists are talking about the huge load which is put on the resources of the country through carrying a housing programme which the country cannot bear. . . . At the same time, when they come to make speeches to the country, they taunt the Government with the fact that there are still people who have no homes of their own. (Mr. Aneurin Bevan, 14 July 1948.)*

Here is the ECONOMIST of 6 December 1947 writing on the White Paper on Capital Investment:

*Housing, the one item which offered an opening for substantial retrenchment, has been pruned, it is true, but merely to the measure imposed by the world timber shortage. In refusing to cancel, or at any rate greatly to curtail, the building of houses not yet started, the Government has missed a great opportunity of showing that it is strong enough to follow the national interest even when it hurts their supporters.*

The decision to restrict for a time the number of new contracts was a step necessary to secure the more rapid completion of houses already begun, not a cut in the housing programme.

*There has been no such cut. The programme has come out of the capital investment cuts, in the main, unscratched and unscathed. (Lady Megan Lloyd George, 14 July 1948.)*

The scale at which the programme can continue depends on national policy and on our economic resources.

If the hoped-for rate of 180,000 houses under construction can be maintained, the million mark will be reached well before the end of 1949.

Compare these figures of Labour's record since 1945 with the progress made in the same period immediately after the 1914-18 war. By the end of April 1921—in nearly two and a half years—74,072 houses were finished. This time in the same period 555,288 families had been found homes. Even if a generous addition is made to the figures after 1918, and 10,000 unsubsidised private enterprise houses are credited to the first two and a half years, progress this time has been seven times as fast.

Or compare housing in Europe:

*Between the end of the war—May 1945—and the end of December 1947 the whole of the new buildings which were put up or made available for people to live in in the 17 countries of Western Europe, including one other country, Czechoslovakia, totalled 750,000: 750,000 houses for a population of 220 million—582,000 houses being built in this country. I find it difficult to understand how hon. Members opposite can . . . go on thinking that the housing programme of this Government has been inadequate when it is compared with any of the 16 countries of Western Europe . . . and when in the same period of time we have built 20, 30, even 40 times more than anything they have built or made available. (Mr. R. Mackay, M.P., 14 July 1948.)*

And in America, too, proportionately there has been nothing like the British achievement.

*. . . I will take the paradise of America, and show what America has done. The American population is approximately three times ours. We should, therefore, expect that their housing figures would be roughly three times ours. They are not dependent on imports of materials as we are, they are not short of labour as we are, and they have machinery necessary for building houses which is far in advance of ours. They were able to carry on the war without in any way interfering with their ordinary consumption programme in the normal way, and their war industry was able to function efficiently without any dislocation of their normal programme. In the main, we would expect their progress to be much greater than ours, considering all the difficulties and restrictions which we have had to face. By the end of 1946 they had built 662,000 houses, while we had built 310,000.*

*. . . The rent of these houses . . . is £3 14s. a week, against 12s. to 18s. The selling price, against our £1,200, is from £2,000 to £2,500.*

*The number of houses let in America is about 30 to 35 per cent against our 80 per cent, and in 1946 they started 860,000 houses, whereas we started 300,000. (Mr. R. Mackay, M.P., 28 July 1947.)*

### **The Tory Record**

*. . . As a result of the drive for houses in the interwar years the problem of England and Wales . . . had practically been solved by September 1939. (Commander Galbraith, M.P., 30 July 1946.) This is a view Labour cannot accept.*

*We could have sustained the malice of the enemy and repaired the injuries inflicted by him upon our cities if we had not, at the same time, had to bear the consequences of 25 years' neglect by the Tory Party. (Mr. Aneurin Bevan, 17 October 1945.)*

Between 1919 and 1939 the number of houses built was 4,334,328. It was an achievement, but in 1939 there still remained millions of houses that were small, overcrowded, old, and insanitary.

Most new houses, except those built for slum clearance, were not being occupied on a basis of need, but money. The speculative builder was building for sale first to middle-class families, and then, only when that market became exhausted, to the better-off working-class families.

The mass of the working-class population had to wait for the better-off families to migrate into new houses before they themselves could move up at all.

Many of them were obliged to anticipate matters and try to buy a house, often straining their resources, through one of the 950 different building societies.

*I view with pleasure that a large number of houses are being built, not to let, but for sale only. I feel that people owning their own houses will do much more to combat Socialism and Communism than all the lectures, tracts, or any other methods governments can adopt. (Sir John Lorden, President of the National Federation of Property-owners and Ratepayers, MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, 23 January 1926.)*

The 1939-45 war made everything worse. Houses destroyed or damaged by enemy action totalled 4 millions. Of these 210,000 were destroyed altogether, and another 250,000 so badly damaged as to be rendered uninhabitable.

With six years' suspension of building, a vast accumulation of repair and maintenance work, an acute need for factories, hospitals,

ools, and millions of wartime marriages, it was clear the housing task would be formidable.

Then a huge red herring was dragged across the trail. Mr. Churchill discovered the temporary house. Beginning with a broadcast from him, statements were made that 500,000 houses would be erected, that the rate of production would be 2,000 to 2,500 a week, that the cost would be £550 for each house, and that £150,000,000 would be spent by the Ministry of Works.

The first result was that steel shares rose at once.

Within a year the programme had been cut down to 145,000 houses; within eighteen months, the cost of each house had risen to between £992 and £1,365, according to the type; and the cost of the programme was to be nearer £200,000,000 than the original estimate. It emerged later that 500,000 of the houses would have consumed twice as much steel as the entire capacity of the British steel industry. No wonder it was said the British people had been led up the garden path only to discover the house wasn't there.

The wartime agricultural cottage scheme is another example of "loquacious inefficiency." Three thousand new cottages for agricultural workers were to be built as an emergency measure. After 12 months the first four were opened, having cost more than £1,000 each. In two years only one-third of the promised dwellings had been produced. Standards were low and rents high. The whole scheme had proved a fiasco.

Turning to the preparations made for a start on actual building after the war, the Labour Government on taking office found that pipelines of supply for materials were empty; local authorities heavily overwhelmed through lack of technical assistance; labour disseminated; and the building industry debauched by extravagance in war damage repairs.

## **Local Authorities and Housing**

The Tories do not seem to know what they really think about local authorities and housing. As Mr. Aneurin Bevan said on 28 July 1948:

*When my predecessor as Minister of Health was in office he made the policy of the Conservative Party quite clear before the election. He said "I anticipate that the vast majority of the houses built will necessarily be provided by the local authorities in the extraordinary difficulties of the two years we are now considering."*

But, said Commander Galbraith:

*It is all too clear that the right hon. Gentleman's choice of instrument has been mistaken.* (30 July 1946.)

Of course by that time it was a different right hon. Gentleman.

Distrust of local authorities in housing matters is traditionally Conservative. It was only in 1919 that councils were really brought into the housing field, and in the early 'twenties the Tories tried to oust them. The "National" Government of the 'thirties came right out into the open, its policy being:

*to concentrate public effort and money on the clearance and improvement of slum conditions, and to rely in the main on competitive private enterprise to provide a new supply of accommodation for the working classes.*

Responsibility for all but slum clearance, and, a little later, the relief of overcrowding, was jettisoned.

Yet, with all the limitations and obstacles, local authorities built 1,332,189 houses between 1919 and 1939.

With this experience behind them, local authorities were well equipped to tackle the job of rehousing the people of Britain after the 1939-45 war. Their record in the last three years has been good. At one time, indeed, the administrative machine was well ahead of industrial capacity, and instead of having to stimulate local authorities to further efforts, the Minister of Health had to slow down approvals for new houses so that the building industry could catch up with authorities said by the Conservatives to be slow, overworked and unsuitable for the task.

They have also co-operated in the necessary controls over repair work and have helped to spread building in an orderly and even way all over the country. As Mr. Bevan has said, the local authority is a planning instrument, whereas the anarchic, individual, speculative builder is no planning instrument at all.

### **'Freedom' for Private Enterprise**

Part of the Conservative case against Labour's housing policy is the accusation that private builders are not being fully used, and that the four to one ratio restored in June 1948 does not give them a good enough chance.

. . . if you are young and without a house, then that clearly is the most pressing of your problems. The Conservatives would give the builders

*a chance to show their mettle instead of stifling them with directions and regulations.* (Lord Woolton broadcasting on 24 January 1948.)

The truth is, of course, that except for a very small proportion of direct labour building, all the houses now being built in this country are being built by private builders. The local authorities let the contracts but the houses are actually built by private firms. And private enterprise can always build houses to sell to local authorities—at controlled prices.

The kind of freedom private builders want, and the Conservatives want on their behalf, is freedom to make money. In their review of the property market in 1946, Fox and Sons, estate agents, are reported (*DAILY TELEGRAPH*, 13 January 1947) to have stated that two steps were necessary "to put the building industry on a sound footing and to produce the houses so urgently required." These steps were to allow local authorities to grant licences with complete freedom to private builders, and to "increase the controlled selling price to at least £1,600 to £1,700."

As it is there is a certain amount of evasion over controls:

*When Joseph Byatt was fined £215 at Middlesbrough for selling a house above the controlled price, the stipendiary magistrate said: "This case may do something to stop this kind of racket."* (*NEWS CHRONICLE*, 24 April 1948.)

Limitations on private building have been defended both by Liberals and by Conservatives.

A resolution on housing was moved at the 1948 Liberal Assembly. It opposed the present system of housing controls and called for a free market in building to provide houses for middle income groups. Here are two extracts from the discussion:

*Mr. Witcher (Frome): I am Chairman of the Housing and Building Committee in Bath which is a bad enough example of the present mess. If you make it a free market 4,000 people living in damp stone basements would have no chance of becoming better off. Take off controls and the people who want the fancy work would prejudice the chance of the poor being rehoused. The lifting of controls would not help the badly housed.*

*Mr. John Baker (Carshalton): I might make a fortune if this resolution were carried, but it would be unfair. There would be few crumbs falling from the rich man's table. . . .*

And now for the Conservatives:

*Bradfield (Berks) Rural District Council, which has a Tory majority,*

*supported Government restrictions when a member proposed yesterday that the ban on private building should be lifted entirely.*

*"You would not be able to get anyone to build a council house if the ban went," said the chairman, Brig.-Gen. Robert Lukin, member of the Cavalry Club. "It would be chaos," added the Hon. Robert Gathorne-Hardy, old Etonian son of the Earl of Carisbrooke. (DAILY HERALD, 14 July 1948.)*

Mr. Bevan said in the House of Commons on 14 July 1948:

*The people of Great Britain, if there was a General Election next week, do not know today what would be the housing policy of the Conservative Party of Great Britain. A more disgraceful exhibition of political bankruptcy has never been seen in this country.*

## Houses for Whom?

In his January 1948 broadcast, Lord Woolton defended the building of houses for sale.

*We should give them (the builders) a chance of building houses so that people could buy the houses if they wanted to (we do not all want to be tenants of council houses): that is what we mean by a property-owning democracy.*

The clear implication is that Socialists do not believe in owner-occupation. This is quite untrue. As Mr. Bevan said on 17 October 1945:

*There is no desire on our part to prevent people owning their own houses. So long as the ownership of the houses is an extension and expression of the personality of the owner, it is an excellent thing; but if the ownership of the houses is a denial of somebody else's personality, it is a social affront.*

Because he believed in owner-occupation he raised the limitations under which local authorities can lend money under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts. There is frequently among non-Labour local authorities a marked reluctance to operate these Acts.

In any case, the Conservatives do not seem to be very clear about their own attitude.

*From the point of view of the country, it matters not one jot whether the houses are for sale or to let so long as houses are forthcoming. Every house that is made available provides a family with a home, relieves congestion, and gives more accommodation to others. (Commander Galbraith, 30 July 1946.)*

But Walter Elliott, M.P., said on 14 July 1948:

*The purpose of any housing policy must be an adequate supply of houses at reasonable rents.*

Evidently, Commander Galbraith and Mr. Walter Elliot do not see eye to eye with each other or with Lord Woolton.

Labour's view is clear-cut. The main need now is for a plentiful supply of houses at reasonable rents. The large majority of those families in greatest need at this moment for homes cannot possibly afford to buy them. Yet their need must come first.

Another contradiction in Tory so-called policy concerns the housing of the middle-classes.

*The emphasis remains very much on working-class housing. No doubt the working-class need is great, but it is being increasingly satisfied at the expense of middle-class houses, the building of which is still virtually suspended.* (A correspondent in the DAILY TELEGRAPH, 4 May 1948.)

But some of the Conservatives actually complain when council houses are let to middle-class people. Brigadier Prior-Palmer said on 28 July 1947:

*I would like to put one point to the Minister. Does he not realise that the so-called middle-class, or whatever he likes to call them, for whom he does not appear to want to build houses, are occupying those very council houses which are being built by the local authorities, and are preventing the working classes from occupying them?"*

As the Minister replied:

*Well, surely that is exactly what we want to happen. If those middle-class persons are persons in need of them more than others, they have a claim to them.*

This gives the key to Labour's policy. The criterion must be need. Whatever their incomes or their standing in society, it is those families who need houses most who should get them. The priority must be theirs. Even when houses are being built for sale, there must be a measure of control to see that they are not bought by people who are already comfortably housed. For this reason, under the new system of licensing, local authorities are obliged to satisfy themselves before granting a licence that it will meet a real need.

Within this general framework, additional priority is given to agricultural workers, miners, and key workers in the export drive. Local authorities with special responsibilities towards these priority classes receive additions to their housing programmes.

## Rural Housing

An enquiry into rural housing made in June 1943, by the National Federation of Women's Institutes, revealed some startling facts, with some frank opinions.

*There was very little resignation about the answers. Very few members felt that what was good enough for their fathers was good enough for them. . . . The lack of convenience which has been endured by the older people will not be tolerated by the present generation. . . . Insanitary conditions make life a burden. We shall rush to the towns when the war is over. The population is likely to drift into the surrounding towns unless these amenities (water and drainage) are made available. So many have already done so. . . . The great majority say in no uncertain terms that conditions are disgraceful and that the lack of water is a national shame. The sense of shame is stressed many times. Countrywomen have an intense local loyalty. They are proud of their beautiful buildings, of lovely hills, green fields, and clear streams. The majority are intensely ashamed of ditches reeking with the overflow from unemptied cesspits, and of fields and gardens used as sewage dumps. . . . Existing conditions are a disgrace to England. The whole situation is degrading. . . . Sanitation is deplorable and not much improved since Tudor days.*

The Labour Government has given specially favourable terms for rural housing. The standard Exchequer subsidy for houses is an annual sum of £16 10s. for 60 years, £5 10s. being provided from the rates. But for rural houses the annual Exchequer subsidy is fixed at £25 10s., the rate contribution from the rural district council being reduced to £1 10s. plus the same sum from the county council. And to help particularly poor areas, special extra help is also available to them.

The subsidy introduced under the 1938 Housing Act for private persons building houses for agricultural workers has been continued. But two stringent conditions are imposed. The agricultural workers want no more tied cottages. So the subsidy is only paid when the house is to be occupied either by the owner or by a tenant who would normally be protected by the Rent Restriction Acts. The second condition is local authorities must be satisfied that the house is better built by private enterprise than by themselves.

At the end of June 1948, the total number of permanent houses built in rural districts, including houses built by private persons under licence, was 56,945 completed; 35,395 were under construction, and 101,303 in tenders approved. This amounts to more than 20 per cent of the total for England and Wales, although the percentage of total population in rural areas is only 17.6.

A special type of prefabricated house—the Airey Rural house—has been planned and manufactured especially for the benefit of rural district councils. It was specially planned to be built by small country builders with a minimum of skilled labour, and is designed to harmonise with rural surroundings. The full programme includes 20,000 houses.

The most urgent need in rural areas at the end of the war was to concentrate labour and materials on the building of new houses. The Government, therefore, did not renew the grants towards the cost of reconditioning existing houses though they have been under continuous pressure to make the grants available again. The Central Landowners' Association and the National Farmers' Union have agitated against this decision, but according to a letter from a rural sanitary inspector, in the DAILY TELEGRAPH of 16 February 1944, the Rural District Councils' Association took a different view:

*The Rural District Councils' Association apparently recognises the futility of modernising "picturesque," "delightful" and "charming" cottages. After a conference with the Minister of Health on housing repairs and the Rent Restriction Acts, a sub-committee of local authorities' associations reported that "although a solution to the housing problem was to be found in new building, other methods should receive high priority. In rural districts, however, new houses rather than repairs are required."*

The building of new houses must come first; but as progress is made it will be possible to use labour and resources on the improvement of rural houses. The Government has promised to introduce legislation as soon as possible. In the meantime, the relaxation of the controls on repair and maintenance work will help owners to improve their own property. Up to £100 may now be spent on any one house within twelve months.

## Rent Control

The Conservative Party appears to resent controls, but there is one control they approve.

*No one in his right senses wants to abolish rent restrictions. When houses are in short supply, no one wants to allow rents to rocket up according to the law of supply and demand.* (Captain Gammans, Tory M.P. for Hornsey, 22 October 1947.)

Tribunals for furnished accommodation were set up under legislation passed in 1946. Because of the urgency of the problem of furnished lettings, this step was taken in advance of the promised revision of the Rent Control Acts.

In the two years in which they have been working the rent tribunals have more than justified their existence. By the end of March 1948 a total of 22,773 cases had been referred to the 77 tribunals in England and Wales, and rents had been reduced in 10,665 cases.

Speaking in the debate on the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill on 31 October 1947, Mr. John Edwards, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, said :

*There is another point of which we should take account. We have received reports from very many areas that landlords with furnished accommodation have spontaneously reduced their rents as a result merely of the existence of a tribunal in their districts . . . I am certain that these tribunals are having an effect which we should lose were the Act to be allowed to expire.*

### The Kind of Houses

Jerry-building was a curse of building between the two wars.

*Jerry built them, Jerry blitzed them. That is what demolition squads are finding out about thousands of working-class and middle-class houses whose shoddy construction and design is being shown up by the effects of bombing. From up and down the country demolition workers tell the same story of poor foundations, unseasoned timber, shoddy brickwork, unsound design and poor quality materials. (REYNOLD'S NEWS, 27 April 1941.)*

We must do better now.

Repair and maintenance work on council houses is not left to chance. By law a sum of money has to be set aside for each house each year. The minimum is £4, but some authorities earmark as much as £12 for their larger houses and flats.

Besides being well-built houses must be bigger. Before 1939 floor space, even in the houses built by local authorities—by far the best available for letting to ordinary families—was much too cramped. The floor area for a three-bedroom house for five persons varied roughly between 750 and 850 sq. ft. Many of them were as small as 700 sq. ft.

Even this was higher than the official recommendation of the Ministry of Health. As late as 1936 the Ministry advised local authorities that for a three-bedroom non-parlour type of house the superficial area of 760 sq. ft. was satisfactory, and it was almost impossible to get approval for anything larger.

Labour's Minister of Health, Mr. Aneurin Bevan, quickly informed local authorities that the three-bedroom house should range from 900 to 950 sq. ft., with other types of houses, and flats, on a similar

scale as recommended by the Central Housing Advisory Committee. In spite of criticism he refuses to accept lower standards.

Another feature of Labour's policy has been to encourage housing authorities to provide a far greater variety in the size of houses, and to build for different income groups.

*I would like to ask the House to consider the grave civic damage caused by allowing local authorities to build houses for only the lower-income groups and private speculators to build houses for the higher-income groups. What is the result? You have unbalanced communities; you have colonies of low-income people living in houses provided by local authorities and you have higher-income groups living in their own colonies. This segregation of the different income groups is a wholly evil thing from the civilised point of view; it is condemned by anyone who has paid the slightest attention to civics and eugenics; it is a monstrous infliction upon the essential psychological and biological oneness of the community.* (Mr. Aneurin Bevan, 17 October 1945.)

## TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

1 IS PLANNING NECESSARY?

2 THE TORY RECORD

3 LABOUR AND PLANNING

4 NEW TOWNS

### Is Planning Necessary?

To plan or not to plan—the Conservative Party seems to be in some doubt. Sir William Darling said on 30 January 1947:

*I have no great confidence in planning at all . . . It is not true that planning by Government, through bureaucracy, is somehow better than the kind of planning which self-seeking persons, pursuing their own interests, somehow manage to achieve.*

So, says one of the Tories, leave town and country planning to "self-seeking persons." But another Conservative speaker, Mr. Henry Strauss, speaking in the same debate, said:

*I believe it to be a fact that no great industrial community can today afford not to have a good code of town and country planning.*

Labour's view is crystal clear. Planning is essential to abolish the tragedy, squalor and inefficiency which the 19th century created in town and country.

*As citizens of splendid cities the English are more ignominious than rabbits.* (D. H. Lawrence.)

There is only one reason for this—the greed of landlords and speculators.

Labour has been accused of living in the *bogy world of demonology, in which the landlord haunts them by day, and frightens them by night.* (Captain Gammans, House of Commons, 29 January 1947.)

When the L.C.C. rebuilt Lambeth Bridge it was making a generous gift to the Duke of Westminster by increasing the value of his property at the Westminster end. He sold eight acres of land in 1930 for a vast sum of money—probably a million pounds.

*A community has always to pay a heavy penalty to its ground landlords for putting up the value of their land.* (Lloyd George, 29 April 1909.)

And Mr. Churchill said in 1909

*Because the population is congested in the city the price of land is high in the suburbs, and because the price of land is high in the suburbs the population must remain congested in the city.*

Land ownership is still shrouded in mystery. We don't know even now how much land is owned by how many people.

Lord Hinchinbrooke, on 11 July 1944, spoke of *the appalling devastation of war, the squalor of the slums, the ravages of time on ancient and uncared for buildings, the unsightliness and inconvenience of ribbon development, the congestion of traffic and the mounting toll of road accidents, the lowered standard of health in congested areas, the non-provision of churches, schools and public places . . . .*"

So what did the Conservatives do about it?

## The Tory Record

*More damage has been done, both to our towns and to the countryside, through sporadic and ribbon development, and by loss of good agricultural land, since 1909, the date of the first Town and Country Planning Act, than in any period preceding it.* (Mr. Silkin, 29 January 1947.)

Between 1927 and 1939 about 60,000 acres of agricultural land were lost each year to buildings and other development.

The Town and Country Planning Act, 1932, was based on a very much better Bill introduced in 1931 by the Labour Government. As it finally emerged it turned out a failure. Only 3 per cent of the area of Great Britain was ever covered by planning schemes made under the Act; over 97 per cent there was no effective planning control. Nor did a feeble attempt in 1935 to restrict ribbon development come to anything. It was marred by the stipulation that property owners who suffered could claim compensation. To quote the Scott Report on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas in 1942,

*The [1935] Act has, broadly speaking, failed to restrict ribbon development . . . because of claims for compensation.*

Tory eagerness to protect landowners spoilt their own efforts to plan. In theory councils could claim "betterment" where the building of roads or other development by public authorities led to increased values in land. But the difficulties of proof were so great that only in three cases has a local authority ever been successful in securing betterment.

Labour had to stand by powerless while the landowners maintained their grip. The first Labour Government in 1924 fell before it could do anything about its intention of introducing a tax on land values. The Labour Government's Finance Act of 1931 imposed such a tax, but it was suspended by the National Government and later repealed. Herbert Morrison fought hard but unsuccessfully in 1939 to introduce a Bill for the rating of site values in London. Vested interests in land were too strong for him.

The 1939-45 war forced the planning pace considerably. Bomb damage, the need for rebuilding, and the publication of three great Reports—the Scott, Barlow, and Uthwatt Reports—forced the Government to take action. A separate Ministry of Town and Country Planning was created in 1943 after a lot of shuffling between various Departments and Committees. In 1943 an Act (described at the time as "a miserable sprat of a Bill") imposed "interim" planning control on the whole country.

But nothing was done about the fundamental economic problems of planning.

Finally the Coalition Government produced a White Paper on the control of land use, the main proposals of which were designed to preserve the "existing pattern of land ownership," with a Bill giving local authorities some expanded powers. This was not until June, 1944, although the Uthwatt Committee had reported in July, 1941, and in October, 1941, Lord Reith had stated that a Bill was "in an advanced stage" of preparation.

The only people really enthusiastic about the Bill seemed to be the Tory Reform Group. One of them, Lord Hinchingbrooke, described it as

*A provocative, enterprising, adventurous but satisfying measure.*

Another Tory M.P., Mr. Ronald Tree, said,

*Speaking myself as a landowner I welcome this Bill.*

But Mrs. Jean Mann wrote in the DAILY HERALD of 12 July 1944:

*The Bill is the Carlton Club's pattern of the peace.*

Lord Latham, then leader of the L.C.C., said that

*comprehensive planning and reconstruction had been "sold down the river."*

During the passage of the Bill through Parliament, a crisis developed inside the Tory Party. A number of Conservatives opposed the compensation provisions of the Bill, and wanted to make them more generous; but Labour Ministers in the Coalition Government fought so hard that the Prime Minister himself, Mr. Churchill, had to intervene against the Tory right wing.

The Acting General Secretary of the National Federation of Property Owners said :

*Our first reaction to the Government's proposals is one of tremendous relief to think that we have been at least saved from the proposals of the Uthwatt Committee's Report. (Reynold's News, 25 June 1944.)*

Landowners were pleased. But local authorities expressed "the keenest and most profound disappointment." Grants were very limited in scale and purpose, and complete planning remained impossible.

*This measure contemplates that towns should be developed piece-meal.*  
(Mr. Lewis Silkin.)

The Tories pay lip service to the principles of town and country planning, but they would do nothing about the one thing that made planning impossible—vested interests in land.

## **Labour and Planning**

Labour at once tackled the economics of planning. Short-term financial difficulties will no longer prevent local authorities from using their planning powers, greatly expanded as these are now. Labour has fulfilled its election pledge:

*In the interests of agriculture, housing and town and country planning alike, we declare for a radical solution for the crippling problems of land acquisition and use in the service of the national plan.*

Labour's Town and Country Planning Act does not nationalise the land but it vests development values in the State. It takes from landowners the chance of making future unearned increments in land values. Whenever building or development is permitted, any resulting increase in land values will in future be collected in whole or in part by the Central Land Board on behalf of the State. Money they have not earned will no longer go into the pockets of private landowners.

To satisfy their claims once and for all the sum of £300 million is being made available to buy them out.

The Act also creates a new planning system and increases the powers and duties of newly-defined local planning authorities. The pre-existing planning system was too static and too parochial. Fifteen hundred local authorities in England and Wales had the power to plan, although not a great many of them actually did. Now the number of planning authorities is 125 and there is provision for joint action between different authorities. The old system, too, was negative—local authorities could with difficulty prevent bad development, but they could not promote or secure good development.

Every planning authority is now under obligation to carry out a survey of its area and prepare a plan within three years. The plans are to be reviewed every five years so that there can be a continuous process of adaptation to change of circumstances. The authorities themselves are no longer confined to development which private enterprise will not undertake. They can buy land compulsorily for leasing to the private developer and they can also carry out building themselves. A revised grants scheme is provided for and grants are being extended to cover areas of bad layout or obsolete development, and also areas of derelict land.

The Act confers wider powers of controlling outdoor advertisements and regulations were made in July, 1948, giving the details of this control. There are also powers to make orders for the preservation of trees, woodlands, and buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

The Act, as a whole, did not receive a very warm welcome from the Conservative Party. During the Second Reading, Captain Gammans said:

*I criticise this Bill as it stands because I consider that it is untimely, unfair and unworkable and that its results are unpredictable.*

Tory leaders agreed that planning was necessary but moved an amendment destroying the value of the Bill. All the familiar argu-

ments were trotted out: that shortages would make the operation of the Bill difficult, etc. Mr. Charles Williams, Tory M.P. for Torquay, reiterated this point:

*I do not believe that the skilled men and women are available to work the intentions of this Bill. I do not believe that where there are good authorities it will necessarily be possible to take their skilled people away to assist the bad authorities. There is an intense shortage of highly skilled men, and also an equally great shortage of labour to carry out the vast plans proposed in the Bill. In addition, there is a shortage of clerical staff . . . It is almost certain that there are not the administrative powers or the capacity or the number to administer and carry out the provisions of the Bill at the required intensity.*

Similar remarks have been made about practically every social advance in the last 50 years.

Another Tory M.P. explained even more clearly why his Party opposed the Bill:

*Let us get this clear. As a Party, we object chiefly to a number of the financial provisions of the Bill. We do not object to those good principles of general planning which are contained in it. (J. H. Hare, Tory M.P. for Woodbridge, 30 January 1947.)*

The Central Landowners' Association strongly criticised the bill. So did the National Federation of Property Owners. And the *FINANCIAL TIMES* (9 January 1947) spoke of it as "provoking uncertainty, gloom and confusion."

## New Towns

One of the first acts of Mr. Silkin, Labour's Minister of Town and Country Planning, was to set up a Committee to advise him on new towns. Legislation was introduced in April, 1946, less than a year after the Labour Government had taken office.

One of the reasons for creating new towns is the necessity for dispersing industry and population from the congested large towns and cities. Another is the need for providing planned communities, not dormitory estates. Moving the Second Reading of the New Towns Bill on 8 May 1946, the Minister said:

*Many towns have built new housing estates on the outskirts. These have largely failed in their purpose of providing a better life for their people and have almost invariably become dormitories consisting of members of one income group with no community life or civic sense. Today there is a need for additional houses possibly equal in number again to those built between the wars. Are these to be built on the*

*outskirts of our towns with the same lack of planning and ill consequence as before? If so, I dread to think what sort of place this still fair land of ours will be in 10 or 15 years' time. This is our last chance.*

The Minister also said on 8 May 1946 that there would be the fullest consultation with the local authorities concerned in the new towns:

*The site of a new town will be determined by the Minister after consultation with the local authorities whose inhabitants will be accommodated in the new town as well as the local authorities who are directly concerned with the new town area. They will all be consulted.*

Some of the new towns already suggested will provide for immediate industrial needs, or for mining areas: these include Ayckliffe and Easington, and, in Scotland, East Kilbride. Others are intended to take industry and population from overcrowded large cities as an alternative to their continuous unplanned extension—these include Stevenage, Crawley, Hemel Hempstead, Hatfield, Welwyn and Harlow.

As part of the capital investment policy the Government have decided that the new towns to serve immediate industrial needs and mining areas should go ahead within the limits of the housing programme. Work on the other type of new town is to be limited, for the time being, mainly to essential preliminary development.

The case of Stevenage illustrates some of the difficulties the new town policy has to face. An attempt was made to sabotage the whole scheme by distortion of the facts. The Minister of Town and Country Planning, Mr. Silkin, had to go down himself to put the truth before the people, and although he was received with boozing and jeering, at the end of the meeting he was loudly applauded. Incidentally, in the darkness, someone had deflated the tyres of his car.

A referendum was organised by the council and paid for by one of the Independent members. Not much more than half the people used their votes. In spite of organised ballyhoo 913 supported the Government scheme, 282 were for a modified scheme, and 1,316 were against it. This led the DAILY EXPRESS of 20 May 1946 to say

*Mr. Silkin must alter his mind about Stevenage. Its people have shown by a clear majority that they do not wish to become townspeople of a new satellite community. Their wishes should be respected.*

Mr. Silkin said, however, that the votes of the people likely to move into the new town should also have been taken.

A group of London businessmen who had formed a Stevenage Residents' Protection Association, were very active at the time of the referendum, using loud-speaker vans and cars to take people to the polling booths. The secretary said:

*The scheme is regarded by us as the thin end of the wedge for nationalising the land.*

A London surveyor said the scheme was

*a foul thing. A vote for this scheme is a vote against the trees we love, the hedgerows in the country. . . .*

But for inspiration and optimism a visit to Peterlee, the new town in Durham, is recommended. Already work has started on what will be the most modern town in the world. It will cost £40 million and will have 30,000 people. It will be developed as a miners' town but will also be a cultural centre for an area with 100,000 people. There will be a varied range of work, and centres for education, health and recreation. Regional surveys have already begun in order to relate the needs of industry, social life, agriculture and diet.

*Surely this is a new form of pioneering, an attempt in planning which can only enhance national prestige.* (NEWS CHRONICLE, 10 May 1948.)

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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- 1 PARTY POLITICS
- 2 LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES
- 3 LABOUR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- 4 GRANTS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES
- 5 RATES 1948-9
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### Party Politics

The Labour Party is often charged with the responsibility for having introduced party politics into local government and into local elections. But Labour can't really claim the credit. An impartial witness, Mr. J. H. Warten, N.A.L.G.O. General Secretary, writes:

*. . . it is untrue to say that the introduction of party politics into local Government was an innovation made by the Labour Party.*

*There are many places, particularly the larger towns, and notably among them the industrial towns of the north, where the local Council reflected the two predominant national parties, Conservative and Liberal, long before the Labour Party was born. There are in fact towns in the North which have had political councils since the middle of the last century, and in which the party caucus system was on each side almost as fully developed as it now is today.*

Yet for many years the Conservative Party pretended to take no interest in local government, although many of its members stood as "Independents," not openly acknowledging their party affiliations, but using Conservative finance, cars and organisation to help them win their seats. Even in the November 1947 elections there were nearly as many "Independent" candidates supported by local Conservative Associations as official Conservative candidates.

Some Conservatives continue to pay lip service to "independence." . . . the aim of democratic government should be to attract the very best men and women regardless of party consideration. . . . (Central Office pamphlet, 1947.)

Not all of them take this line:

*Go back to your towns and be sure you kill the idea that people can be "Independent," "Non-Party," and "Progressive." What we have to do is to come out and say we are Conservatives.* (Hudson, Chairman of Conservative Party Parliamentary Committee on Local Government.)

There is still some objection to candour. At a meeting held in October 1947 before the Conservative Annual Conference, there was a full discussion in which divided views were revealed. Mr. Thomas of Swansea protested:

*On my local council there are three Conservative members. If they stood as Conservatives there would be none.*

Although Conservatives often complain about the introduction of national issues into local elections, they have taken to it like a duck to water.

*The results and the heavier polling (in November 1947) were due to the very active Party campaigning—particularly by the Conservative Party—and the fact that the opportunity was used to demonstrate what the electorate thought about the Government's handling of various questions of national, rather than local, moment, the food situation probably being outstanding.* (Article in TORY FORUM, March/April 1948.)

They also object very strenuously to Group methods in local government:

*We all know from our experience that the Socialist member of a local authority does not enjoy independence. He has to toe the party line.* (Walter Elliot, M.P.)

Yet a recent publication from the Conservative Central Office takes the group technique much further than Socialists have ever done.

- (i) *Councillors should attend party meetings held prior to the Council Meetings.*
- (ii) *Councillors should choose a leader. This is essential, and having chosen the leader, they should give complete support. The leader must be the mouthpiece for policy.*
- (iii) *The leader should appoint leaders on each Committee if in opposition.*

(Conservative Central Office pamphlet—LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PARTY ORGANISATION.)

They accuse Socialists of accepting directions:

*The practice of the Socialists of reporting every matter to the local Trades and Labour Council, and of even receiving directions from that body on how to act on certain matters, is not a necessary part of the party system.* (Central Office pamphlet.)

The real practice of Labour Groups is very different from what is attributed by them; policy-making is their own job, and theirs alone.

In any case the Conservative Central Office is now advising local Conservative groups:

*The Agent should be invited to all party conferences and local party group meetings of councillors in order to ensure that he is completely informed as to policy and is therefore in a position to offer sound advice . . .* (Advice to Conservative Councillors, Central Office pamphlet.)

## Local Authority Services

In the last three years several services have been taken away from local authorities and have either been nationalised—electricity, gas, transport—or have been handed over to regional organisations, such as the Regional Hospital Boards. The smaller authorities, especially the non-county boroughs, are also many of them disappointed because some of their services have been transferred to the county councils, including education, maternity and child welfare, police and town and country planning. Hence the lament that Labour is undermining local government.

The curious thing is that whenever a Labour Government expands the functions of local authorities, the wail goes up that local authorities are already overwhelmed and cannot tackle any new jobs.

Housing, for instance:

*In selecting local authorities as his main instrument, the Minister was placing upon them a burden for which they were not designed, for which they were not staffed, and which their organisation was incapable of carrying; and that particularly so when they had placed upon them recently the onerous burden of licensing, a burden which has since been increased. . . . (Commander Galbraith, 30 July 1946.)*

Then town and country planning:

*I would like to remind the house that there are two or three matters which will make this Bill quite impossible and unworkable. I do not believe—and there is certainly no evidence in this Debate—that the skilled men and women are available to work the intentions of this Bill. I do not believe that where there are good authorities it will necessarily be possible to take their skilled people away to assist the bad authorities. There is an intense shortage of highly skilled men, and also an equally great shortage of labour to carry out the vast plans proposed in the Bill. In addition, there is a shortage of clerical staff. . . . It is almost certain that there are not the administrative powers or the capacity of the number to administer and carry out the provisions of the Bill at the required intensity. (Mr. Charles Williams, Tory M.P. for Torquay.)*

Civic restaurants:

*Is there a need for a Measure which was introduced originally as a wartime emergency measure? I do not think there is a necessity for it in most parts of the country. . . . I think it is a brazen hussy of a Bill, a painted harlot of a Bill, and I do not think it is necessary on any ground. (Sir Peter Macdonald, M.P., 28 November 1946.)*

*We believe it is unfair competition against traders. (W/Cdr. Robinson, 28 November 1946.)*

*All competitive municipal trading must be stopped. (Henry Brooke, Tory Leader on the L.C.C., 1 October 1947.)*

These complaints are part of the traditional Conservative attitude to local authorities:

*. . . The present powers, obligations, and work throw upon local authorities as much as they are capable of doing. (Mr. Levy, M.P., 4 March 1938.)*

*In the first place local authorities are notoriously overburdened with*

*work and to add other responsibilities . . . would seriously impair the local government machinery.* (Mr. Bernays, M.P., 4 March 1938.)

*I do not think that town councils are very competent to do this job (municipal trading). I do not think that they are very good at doing their existing job today.* (Mr. Herbert Williams, M.P., 4 March 1938.)

*Any further work might impair the efficiency of local government and cause something like a breakdown of it.* (Mr. Bernays, M.P., 10 March 1939.)

## Labour and Local Government

The need for wider areas to administer some of the local authority services is not denied.

*With the present system, even the best friends of local government found it difficult to argue that local authorities should be permitted to retain the services which require large-scale development and administration; while any substantial extension of municipal functions of the kind which the Webbs foresaw in their "Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain" was impractical without a modernisation of the entire structure.* (Prof. W. A. Robson, Political Quarterly, July/October 1948.)

Allied to this is the need for reform of the local government structure. The following figures, assembled by the Local Government Boundary Commission, illustrate some of the present distortions in the structure:

The largest county in population, apart from London, is Middlesex (2,270,000) and the smallest Rutland (18,000).

The largest county borough is Birmingham (1,085,000) and the smallest Canterbury (25,000).

Almost one-third of the counties and county boroughs have populations under 100,000.

23 out of 61 counties have populations below 200,000 and of these 13 are below 100,000.

The largest urban district has a population of 200,000 and the smallest 700, with 1d. rate products of £8,000 and £16 respectively.

In a 1944 report on the future of local government, adopted by the Annual Conference of the Labour Party, the solution advocated was a democratic regionalism. This may still be the long-term solution. But is it possible to wait, for expansion of the social services, better

housing, education, town and country planning, until the structure of local government has been recast?

Labour thinks first of the services. A better hospital system, the efficient production and distribution of electricity, and other such services cannot be run by local authorities as they are at present. But the Labour Government is making the fullest use of local authorities in the work of building up the new social service state. Much more is expected from them than in the past. The unprogressive ones amongst them never objected to negative control, when they were prevented from expanding and improving their services. Many of them do now object to positive control and having to provide a wholly new standard of service.

Labour regards some of the services administered by local authorities as so important that they must not be failures. Consequently there must be a measure of national control. In education, for instance, a big new responsibility has been placed, since 1944, on the county councils. In the past many of them have been bad education authorities. Rural schools have suffered and there have been inadequate facilities for secondary education. If everything were left to the authorities, what would happen?

Mr. Ede has given an example:

*... I shall never forget when I was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education going round trying to persuade local education authorities to start school meals. I went into the offices of one very important county education committee and was told: "If there is any child in this county who wants a school meal, let his parents apply to the Public Assistance Committee." I am not prepared to leave to local authorities and local education authorities with that mentality the responsibility for dealing with deprived children. (Mr. Ede, Debate on Children Bill, 28 June 1948.)*

What appears to be central control, too, is necessitated by shortages of all kinds and the need for rationing. Building labour and materials, for instance, are badly needed, not only for houses but for schools, school canteens, health centres, council offices, and other buildings needed for carrying on the work of local government. Without a rationing system administered by the different government departments, the larger and more effective local authorities would simply take more than their share. Central control is no more than protection for the weaker brethren.

*You need have no misgivings about the general attitude of the Government towards local government. We have had to nationalise certain*

*services and we may have to nationalise others. If it happens that local government loses functions because they have to be carried out by different instruments, additional functions must be given to it to maintain its vitality and importance in the State. The functions of local government will be enlarged.* (Mr. Aneurin Bevan, 25 September 1946.)

## Grants to Local Authorities

Local authorities have heavy responsibilities in spending public money. Their 1947 expenditure of £590 millions was equal to a fifth of the total expenditure of all public authorities, including the National Exchequer. At the end of the year 1944-5 their outstanding debt amounted to nearly £1,400,000,000. Individual local councils have a great deal of money to spend. The Nottinghamshire County Council, for instance, will spend nearly £5 millions in the year 1948-9, and Nottinghamshire is not one of the biggest counties.

Local councils, in fact, are "in business" in a big way. The cities of Glasgow and Birmingham each have a capital of about £60 millions. London has £86 millions capital. The capitals of Imperial Chemical Industries, and of Lever Bros. (two of the largest business units in the country) were £75 millions and £70 millions respectively in 1939.

But the total cost of all local authority services is not heavy compared with the cost of other goods and services of less social value. In 1947 local authorities spent £590 millions. In the same year £678 millions were spent on alcohol and £690 millions on tobacco. Another £1,000 millions (according to the estimate of the Churches' Committee on Gambling) was spent on betting.

On the other hand the personal, geographical and class inequalities resulting from the very nature of rates as a form of taxation, and from the way in which the system has so far been operated, have made it impossible for a great increase in rates to take place without some big changes.

*From a tax paid mainly by the rich rates have been transformed into a tax paid mainly by the poor and the relatively poor. Nearly every development in the rating system that has taken place since 1600 has contributed to this result.* (Sullivan, REFORM OF THE RATING SYSTEM.)

The real burden of rates lies most heavily on small householders and proportionately on those in the lower income groups.

In the last year before the war local authorities raised £211 million in rates. Of this the contribution from occupiers of houses rated at £50 a year or less was 50 per cent, and 5 per cent came from residential

shops; 36 per cent of the total came from lock-up shops, offices, warehouses, hotels, cinemas, etc.; less than 5 per cent from occupiers of large houses; and 4 per cent from manufacturing industry and railways.

*The average working class family, with expenditure in 1937 of £204 to £243 a year according to its region, would have been paying about 3-4 per cent of its income in rates. Poorer families in the range from £2 to £3 a week might have been paying 5-6 per cent or even more, especially in London and Wales. This compares very unfavourably with the position of families whose expenditure was at the £300 a year level, who would have been paying only 2½ per cent to 3 per cent, except in London. (Michael Fogarty, THE REFORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE.)*

The geographical inequality is also very real. The fact is that some areas are rich and others are poor. The poorest areas are just those where the need for local authority services is most acute. It is not far from the truth to say that rateable value per head of the population in industrial and residential areas varies in proportion to needs.

Because, too, of the serious distortions in the present system of local government, the local authority units vary very much in size, population and financial strength. The product of a penny rate, for instance, varies enormously. In the county boroughs the product of a penny rate is highest in Birmingham (£28,080) and lowest in Merthyr Tydfil (£835). In the non-county boroughs it is highest in Hendon (£7,950) and lowest in Richmond (Yorks) (£140). In the urban district councils it is highest in Harrow (£8,600) and lowest in Glyncorrwg (£95).

These facts are not new. They have been known as criticisms of the rating system for years and years. What was the Tory solution?

Part of it was the exemption of industrial owners from paying their full share.

*Owing to the previous evolution of the rating system and the exemption of stock-in-trade in 1840 and machinery in 1925, industry and the railways were by 1928-9 paying only about £26 millions out of a total rate-levy of £166 millions, which amounted to roughly 16 per cent. On the basis of returns from 23 industries the Balfour Committee estimated that the average proportion which rates formed of the total cost of production of manufactured goods was 55 per cent. Yet the Tory Government of the day considered that this was too great a burden for industry to bear. They proceeded to reduce it to about £7 millions—little over 4 per cent of the total sum levied in rates in 1928-9. Mr.*

*Chamberlain was indeed assured of the everlasting gratitude of the Birmingham industrialists: the annual sum paid by all of them together in rates amounts to little more than £240,000. (Sullivan, THE RATING SYSTEM.)*

A more commendable part of Mr. Neville Chamberlain's solution to the problems of local government finance was the Block or General Exchequer Grant, introduced in 1929. The grant was distributed to local authorities under a formula which was supposed to ensure more money went to the poorer authorities and less to the richer ones. No approach to equalisation, however, was made and the rate problem was acute in the years just before the outbreak of war in 1939. The war put it into cold storage. But it was obvious that as soon as the war ended and the work of reconstruction began, together with (under a Labour Government) the expansion of the social services, better housing, and so forth, something would have to be done.

That something is the Local Government Act, 1948.

The 1948 Act does away with the block grant, and puts in its place equalisation grants. These will be paid to the county council and county borough councils in England and Wales, and to the county council and the councils of large burghs in Scotland. The new grants will be paid if the financial resources of the above-mentioned authorities are not up to a certain minimum, based on the rateable value per head of weighted population. The grants will be re-calculated each year.

It was estimated that if this change had taken place in 1946/7 the total relief for England and Wales would have been about £33,000,000, and for Scotland about £5,000,000.

In addition, transitional grants are to be paid for the first five years. In England and Wales this will assure each county and county borough council a gain equivalent to a rate of sixpence, after taking account of the reliefs afforded by the new equalisation grants, the transfer of hospital and poor law services to the state, amounting to £63,000,000 for England and Wales and £10,000,000 for Scotland, and a new basis for Education Grants.

The transitional grants are likely to amount to £900,000 for England and Wales in the first year (1948-9).

In Scotland (where the levels of valuation are higher) the transitional grants are likely to assure each county and large burgh of a gain equivalent to 4½d. The total is estimated at £267,000 for the first year.

These "cushion" grants will be scaled down by one-fifth each year, until they finally disappear in the sixth year.

The equalisation and transitional grants will not be paid to county districts, but the Act provides that each county council in England and Wales, outside London, shall make annual payments on a capitation basis to each of its county district councils. The London County Council will make annual payments to the metropolitan borough Councils in accordance with a scheme made by the Minister of Health after consultation with the London authorities.

In Scotland the capitation grants will be paid to small burghs and landward areas.

### Rates 1948-9

The success of the new system of financial aid is proved by the comparison of rates levied in 1947-8 and 1948-9 of 504 local authorities in England and Wales. The comparisons are made in the Return of Rates of Selected Authorities published by the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, from which the following figures have been extracted. It has to be remembered, too, that services are being expanded, and costs have risen; so that rate figures do not show the full extent to which local authorities are benefiting.

	Increase	Decrease	No Change
83 County Boroughs ...	21	35	27
28 Metropolitan Boroughs	13	7	8
209 Non-County Boroughs	45	121	43
184 Urban Districts ...	37	119	28
504	116	282	106
The number of decreases between 1d. and 1s. 11d. is			182
,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     2s.     ,,     3s. 11d.     ,,			50
,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     4s.     ,,     5s. 11d.     ,,			29
,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     6s.     ,,     7s. 11d.     ,,			18
,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     8s.     ,,     9s. 11d.     ,,			2
,,     ,,     ,,     ,,     at     10s. is			1
	Total     ...		282

The majority of the increases are small, and most of them took place in the richer authorities' areas such as Bournemouth, Westminster, and Bexhill.

As far as counties are concerned, the following table compares the rates *required* (excluding alterations to balances) in 1947-8 with 1948-9, and demonstrates the general reduction in rates required and the movement that has taken place towards rate equalisation:

Total Rates Required	No. of Counties	
	1947-8	1948-9
12s. 6d. in the £1 or less ... ...	6	19
Over 12s. 6d. but not over 15s. ...	24	33
,, 15s. ,, ,, 17s. 6d. ...	21	9
,, 17s. 6d. ,, ,, £1 ...	5	—
,, £1 ... ... ... ...	—	—
	61	61
	1947-8	1948-9
Highest rate required	s. d. 22 4 Carmarthen	s. d. 16 6 Montgomery
Lowest rate required	10 5 Surrey	8 3 Durham
Range ... ...	11 11	8 3

Three counties, all in Wales, show a reduction of rate requirement exceeding seven shillings in the pound:

County	Rate Requirement		Reduction
	1947-8	1948-9	
Glamorgan ... ...	s. d. 20 6	s. d. 9 7	s. d. 10 11
Monmouth ... ...	18 8	9 8	9 0
Carmarthen ... ...	22 4	15 1	7 3

The largest increase is in Radnor, where the rate requirement is up by 1s. 6d. from 14s. 3d. to 15s. 9d.

By comparing rate requirements instead of actual rates levied, "artificial variations" due to adjustment of balances are avoided. In one county, for example, the rate requirement shows a *reduction* of 3s. 7d., but the actual rate levied shows an *increase* of 3s. od.

## Valuation and Assessments

Changes are also being made to centralise the work of valuation for rating purposes and lay down definite principles for assessing houses. If block grants are to be based upon the rateable value per head of the population, then as Mr. Bevan says, "You cannot allow the local authority to determine the size of the spoon they will dip into the national pool." In any case, uniformity in valuation is both necessary and desirable. It cannot be brought about under the existing system.

*The Central Valuation Committee found that in 1937 the total number number of rating authorities acting for rating areas in administrative counties was 1,442 and of these 345 acted for areas where the product of a penny rate was not more than £100. Such small units, it has been widely felt, can rarely secure the proper personnel to achieve correct assessments. (Conservative Central Office pamphlet VALUATION REFORM 1948.)*

The writer of this Conservative pamphlet quotes the chairman of a rural district council:

*We call a small committee which goes round with the assistance of our very efficient staff, and we meet a few local people, all friends of ours, our neighbours, and we discuss what the valuation shall be. If there are irregularities, which I regret to say there are quite often, they may or may not get before the Assessment Committee. They do if the owner thinks the figure too high, and if he thinks it is too low they do not.*

He goes on to say that if some rating authorities are influenced by sentiment, still more have been allowed to under-assess the properties in their areas to escape their fair share of the county rate or other charge.

Area	Actual level of assessment as a percentage of the true level of assessment
London Ring (ex London County)	62
Black Country ... ... ...	65
Sussex Coast ... ... ...	69
Merseyside ... ... ...	74
Manchester Area ... ... ...	79
South Wales ... ... ...	80
Tyneside ... ... ...	81

Research has shown that while all authorities tend to undervalue their areas, the tendency is much more marked in richer than in poorer areas.

This would mean that the richer areas would attract a bigger share of the Exchequer grants than they were entitled to.

As Mr. Bevan said,

*Sadly and reluctantly, but inevitably, we have come to the conclusion that it is necessary for the central Government to accept the responsibility for valuation.*

The Local Government Act therefore creates central machinery for valuation of property for rating purposes and provides a new basis of values for small dwelling houses by reference to prewar values. Mr. Bevan has summed up the why and the wherefore of these changes:

*If the rateable value per head of the population is to form the basis, after being properly weighted by factors which are responsible for local difficulties, then it is very hard for the central Government to accept the position that the assessment of rateable values should be in the hands of the beneficiaries! I have the greatest respect for the objectivity of local authority valuers. Mind you, the arts of valuation are even more obscure than the block grant formula itself! Of course, you all know that valuers are mathematical geniuses; nevertheless, they could often arrive at exactly the same valuation by sheer guesswork! When people talk to me about the law of valuation I say, "There ain't any such animal." It may be practicable, it is usually practicable, to arrive at some kind of formula which applies with rough justice to industrial hereditaments; but to base the value of a residential property on a hypothetical tenant is something which will defy the medieval schoolman, because the Rent Restriction Acts, the owner-occupier, Crown property and all kinds of restrictions and all kinds of differences make the hypothetical tenant a person you pursue but never catch. Therefore, it is necessary that we should simplify at least the principles for the valuation of residential properties, because what really matters in assessment is the relationship between one citizen and another; it is equity we are trying to reach, so that two citizens, occupying roughly the same sort of property, should pay roughly the same sort of contribution to the rates. In other words, you are not trying to reach some unattainable mathematical formula, but you are trying to reach principles of equity as between one ratepayer and another, so that everybody is conscious of justice having been done.*

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 1 MOTHERS & CHILDREN
- 2 FEEDING THE CHILDREN
- 3 THE SCHOOL LEAVING AGE
- 4 THE CONTENT OF EDUCATION
- 5 TRAINING FOR JOBS
- 6 NEGLECTED CHILDREN

## The Health of Mothers and Children

In 1947, with Labour at Westminster, fewer babies died in their first year of life than has ever been known in the history of the country. The rate had been reduced to 41 per 1,000—a new low record.

In the five-year period 1934-8, under a "National" Government, the rate was 57. If it had been brought down to 41, at that time, 50,000 child lives would have been saved. Fifty thousand babies murdered by bad conditions.

And it was the children of the workers that died. In 1931-2 mortality was four times as high for the children of unskilled labourers as for the children of professional men.

A new low record for the deaths of mothers was also reached in 1947—1.43 per 1,000. If this had happened in 1934-8, nearly 7,000 mothers would not have died. Yet an experiment carried out by the National Birthday Trust Fund in 1935-7 showed that safer childbirth and healthier babies could be achieved at a cost of 13s. 4d. for each pregnancy, spent on the right things at the right time. In those years, the total national expenditure on public maternity and child welfare services was less than ½d. per head per week.

But Labour looks after mothers and children. Full employment means decent food. The wartime services for mothers-to-be—extra rations, orange juice, vitamin tablets, and above all milk—have been continued. The National Health Service takes care of the doctor's bill. Midwifery services are being improved. Local councils are urged to provide domestic help. The result—new records in safer motherhood and healthier childhood.

*In ten years, according to the French professor Henri Bonnet, England will have a generation of younger men and women physically and mentally superior to those of any other European country.*

Under a Tory *régime*, childhood diseases were more deadly to poorer children than to the children of the wealthy. Measles was 18 times as fatal for the child of the unskilled labourer as for the wealthier child; whooping cough 7 times, bronchitis and pneumonia 6 times, enteritis 4 times.

Children suffered from the evils of mass unemployment under the Tories. The areas of malnutrition were those where unemployment was most widespread. In 1935, in Durham County nearly 23 per cent of the children were below normal according to standards of nutrition, compared with 4 per cent in more prosperous Essex.

In 1945, after nearly seven years of war, children were taller and heavier than children of the same age in 1938. It took a war to give fair shares to Britain's children.\*

### **Feeding the Children**

Today, despite world food shortages and the need for rationing . . . *there are far fewer really hungry children than there were 10 or 15 years ago.* (Professor Alan Moncrieff, Nuffield Professor of Child Health, 29 December 1947.)

The reason is that parents can afford to feed their children. And besides children's allowances, Labour is providing more school meals, 750,000 a day more than in 1945—a total of 2,322,000. The percentage of children taking them is 52.5. These meals cost about 5d., but 300,000 children enjoy free meals. 4,000 new canteens have been built since the war ended. Ultimately, when enough kitchens can be built, all school meals will be free. Kitchens and canteens are being built to cater for a further half million children each year.

School meals were first started in a very small way as the result of a motion pushed through the House of Commons in 1906 by the then newborn Labour Party. Since August 1946 Labour has given free milk to children in school. About seven children out of ten had the milk previously, but this jumped to more than nine out of ten in August 1946.

Compare this with the Tory record. In 1921—roughly a parallel period after World War I—the Government issued an order restricting the distribution of free milk by local authorities. In April 1928 the Tories reduced the State grant towards milk for expectant mothers and children. Backward local authorities refused to provide school meals—“There is always public assistance,” they used to say.

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\* See also section on Health, page 57.

And even today. . . .

*We remain unconvinced of any real reason, social or economic, for the provision of free dinners at school for all children. . . . There is no public demand for them.* (The President of the National Association of Schoolmasters.)

## The School Leaving Age

Labour has raised the school leaving age to 15. This was one of the provisions of the 1944 Education Act, passed by the wartime Coalition. As a result, the Tories are trying to claim some of the credit. Their records speaks for itself. An Education Act, under which the school leaving age could have been raised, was passed by the Coalition of World War I. It was killed by the Tory-dominated Government. There was even a proposal to raise the school entry age to six, as part of the economy campaign.

In 1926 the Hadow Report recommended raising the school leaving age. The second Labour Government tried to carry out the recommendations. The scheme was thrown out by the Tory House of Lords. But in the 20 years between the two wars, the majority of young people were either unemployed or in blind-alley jobs.

In 1946 when Labour announced that the school leaving age was to be raised there were complaints that it was too expensive, that there were not enough schools or teachers, that we needed the children to work for the production drive.

*It would be midsummer madness to allow the raising of the school leaving age to take effect this year.* (Sir Hubert Henderson. SUNDAY TIMES, 23 February 1947.)

*I cannot believe that to diminish our available manpower by taking away lads and girls over fourteen, and to use resources on the necessary extra school buildings, can be a reasonable step.* (Viscount Maugham. SUNDAY TIMES, 2 March 1947.)

*I am highly cynical as to the value of extra education for those whose function in life is to produce. If further tuition were successful, it would only be likely to create a number of adolescents whose ambition is either to be black-coated workers or junior Civil Servants.* (Letter in the DAILY TELEGRAPH, 5 December 1946.)

Labour set out to provide the schools, the furniture and the teachers. During 1947 sites and plans were approved for 720 new schools, almost 2,000 temporary classrooms were built, furniture was made for 100,000 new places. By the end of 1947 almost 8,000 new teachers

had passed the emergency course. There were more teachers, though fewer pupils, in the schools in 1947 than in 1938, and the size of classes was being reduced.

## The Content of Education

State education only began in 1870, after appalling struggles. A Royal Commission in 1861 opposed a universal compulsory system as being *neither attainable nor desirable*.

It took an incredibly low view of the minimum requirements of education. It believed that the children of the poor could get all the education they needed by the age of ten or eleven. The merest elements were enough—reading, writing and arithmetic.

Right up to the Education Act of 1944 education in this country was on a class basis:

*First came the public schools, the famous boarding establishments which educate the children of the upper class, the 1 per cent of the population which before the war possessed 60 per cent of the privately owned wealth of the country.*

*Next come the secondary schools: these are the schools of the middle class, the 5 per cent of the nation which owns the next 25 per cent of our wealth.*

*The vast majority of the nation's children—between 80 and 85 per cent—receive such education as they get in the elementary schools, generally in overcrowded classes, often in very unsatisfactory buildings and with completely inadequate equipment.\**

And the cost? £120 to £150 a year for each pupil in the public schools; £30 to £50 in the secondary schools; and £13 to £15 in the elementary schools.

All this is being changed. From now on every child will pass through the three stages of primary, secondary, and further education. Instead of the three R's, the object now is the three A's—education for every child fully suited to age, ability and aptitude. The School Certificate examination is being replaced by very much freer methods of testing ability; education is no longer to be kept in an examinational strait-jacket.

Replacing the famous step-ladder to the universities (better described as a greasy pole) Labour is making it easier for young people with talent but without money to go to the university.

\* DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION St. John Reade and D. Sargent.

In 1947 the number of State scholarships was increased from 360 to 750 a year, and their value increased. 52,013 ex-Servicemen and women have had university training grants. Scientific and technological scholarships are being awarded. A University Scholarships Working Party was appointed in June 1948 to advise on changes in the method and scope of scholarship allocations.

In 1938 only 47,000 young workers enjoyed part-time education in working hours. This increased to 167,000 in 1947. And when the new county colleges are set up as part of the Education Act, all young people under eighteen will have one day a week, or its equivalent, set aside from their working hours for further education.

## **Training for Jobs**

It took over a hundred years of agitation to stop young children being suffocated, burnt, or crippled, by cleaning chimneys. It took forty years of Royal Commissions and propaganda to prevent this sort of thing—a description of young girls working in the mines in 1842:

*Chained, belted, harnessed like dogs in a dog cart, black, saturated with wet, and more than half naked—crawling upon their hands and feet, and dragging their heavy loads behind them—they present an appearance indescribably disgusting and unnatural.*

This is a long time ago. But

*To start work at the age of eleven or twelve did no child any harm.*  
So said a Tory councillor in Coventry in January 1948.

Under the Tories more than one lad in two left school to take up temporary, casual jobs—van boys, errand boys, page boys. More often than not they were fired at sixteen—when they became insurable. Less than one boy in four found work with prospects of advance.

This was a terrible waste of Britain's youth. As Ernest Bevin said on 1 October 1943:

*The question that has always occupied the mind of Parliament, local authorities and industries is that of expense. "Can we afford a general scheme of education for the adolescent?" I will reverse that and ask "Can we afford not to?" Certain things that stand out in my memory have added enormously to the cost of the war and the length of the struggle. I put highest in this category the wastage of skill that went on between the wars.*

Only 104 out of a possible 315 local education authorities had set up juvenile employment offices by March 1945. Labour has set up a

nation-wide Juvenile Employment Service. The Officers of the Service help school leavers to decide what kind of work will suit them. Then the Service helps to find suitable openings. Officers keep in touch with the youngsters until they are eighteen. A National Juvenile Employment Council has been set up to advise the Minister of Labour.

The Juvenile Employment Service has negotiated with unions and employers to set up juvenile training schemes for industry. About 20 industries and trades are already covered, ranging from building and shoemaking to printing and bookbinding. If children have to travel or for other reasons cannot afford to take up training, the Service will help with grants.

## Neglected Children

There is still much to be done before Britain's system of child care is complete.

*As we took evidence, debasing conditions for young children appeared again and again in horrifying detail. Homes destitute of all comfort, squalid and filthy, reeking with the stench of urine and excreta, where children undisciplined in every way were found with filthy bodies, covered with sores, sleeping on piles of dirty flock in the corner of an attic; children truly deprived of care and affection.\**

Again:

*Of the 37,474 cases of gross neglect dealt with in 11 months (1946-7) by the N.S.P.C.C., nearly two-thirds (23,430) were classified as suffering from neglect, 3,241 from ill-treatment and assault, and the remainder were listed under "exposure, begging, corruption of morals, abandonment and other wrongs." This number might be multiplied many times if we are to gauge the number of neglectful parents who, though they have not passed through the hands of the N.S.P.C.C. or been before the Courts, do not in fact provide adequately for their children.\**

One of the worst crimes committed under Tory-dominated Governments was that "problem" families were created—under the stress of bad conditions, poverty, lack of training, and constant ill-health, people who might have become decent parents have degenerated into mental wrecks totally unfitted to care for their children. Progressive local authorities under the pressure of public opinion are giving special

*It was considered more likely that a man drank to escape from squalling,*

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\* THE NEGLECTED CHILD AND HIS FAMILY, a study made by a sub-committee of the Women's Group on Public Welfare, 1948.

attention to problem families by intensive visiting and case-work. But let one lie be nailed. Drink is not a cause of child neglect—it may be the result.

*dirty children, a slatternly wife, and an unkempt home, than that he neglected or ill-treated his children because he drank.*

In 1946 the Curtis Report exposed the way in which the Tories had evaded their responsibilities to Britain's waifs.

*There were 32 children on the register, eight of them were sick children . . . In the children's ward was an eight-year-old mentally defective girl. . . . She could not use her arms or legs. There were two babies with rickets clothed in cotton frocks . . . no more than discoloured rags. The smell in this room was dreadful. A premature baby lay in an opposite ward alone. . . . The mattresses were fouled and stained. . . .*

As a result of this report, Labour has passed the Children Act providing machinery to take care of the homeless children. Local children's committees and children's officers are being appointed. Children will, where possible, be boarded with foster parents. It is the start of a new deal for the children.

One small potential gap in child services has just been closed by the Labour Government. In Lancashire working mothers always used to leave their children with neighbours or child-minders. The system is still used, both in the cotton areas and elsewhere. So the Nurseries and Child Minders Regulation Act gives local authorities power to register child-minders and private nurseries, and inspect the premises. Its aim is

*to safeguard the health and welfare of young children . . . and to give mothers who go out to work . . . the peace of mind that comes from the knowledge that their children are being properly cared for while they are at work. (Mr. L. J. Edwards, House of Commons, 28 May 1948.)*

Even this small advance got a very grudging welcome from the Tories.

*I think it may be said of this Bill what cannot be said of any other Measure which has been put forward by this Government, that at worst it will be harmless and at best it may do some real good. (Mr. Richard Law, Tory M.P., Hansard, 28 May 1948.)*

Besides child-minders there are, of course, local authorities day nurseries. There are nearly 900 of these with places for about 44,000 children under five, plus 370 nursery schools for 19,000 children and 2,360 nursery classes for over 68,000 children.

# SOCIAL SECURITY

- 1 PROMISE AND FULFILMENT
- 2 LABOUR AND TORY RECORDS COMPARED
- 3 NATIONAL INSURANCE BENEFITS
- 4 INDUSTRIAL INJURIES
- 5 CONTRIBUTION RATES
- 6 NATIONAL ASSISTANCE
- 7 COST OF THE SCHEMES
- 8 PROGRESS REPORT

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On 10 June 1941 the Rt. Hon. Arthur Greenwood, M.P. (Minister without Portfolio) announced the appointment of an inter-departmental Committee, of which Sir William Beveridge would be Chairman, to carry out a comprehensive survey of social insurance and allied services.

The Beveridge Report was published on 2 December 1942.

## Promise and Fulfilment

On 5 July 1945 the nation gave the Labour Party a majority. In its election programme, the Labour Party stated:

*Labour led the fight against the mean and shabby treatment which was the lot of millions while Conservative Governments were in power over long years. A Labour Government will press on rapidly with legislation extending social insurance over the necessary field to all.* (LET US FACE THE FUTURE, p. 10.)

On the third anniversary of Labour's General Election triumph, 5 July 1948, the full social security scheme was in force. The legislative stages were :

Family Allowances Act, June 1945 (Coalition Government measure.  
Allowances paid from August 1946).

National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act, July 1946.

National Insurance Act, August 1946 (Old Age Pensions of 26s.  
a week paid from October 1946).

National Assistance Act, May 1948.

The effect of these measures together with the National Health Service Act, November 1946, and the Children Act, June 1948, will be to give pooled security to every citizen from birth to death.

These great measures did not, as the Tories claim, originate in the Coalition Government "in which the Conservatives were in the majority." They are the long term result of the tireless work of the pioneers of the Labour Movement and their successors, both leaders and rank and file.

On 8 March 1906, the newly formed Parliamentary Labour Party of twenty-nine members introduced and got carried a motion demanding old age pensions.

In 1907 and succeeding years, the Party introduced a Right to Work Bill "to make provision for work or maintenance being given to the unemployed." This proposal, as Keir Hardie said on 27 January 1909, "met with a good deal of ridicule and a good deal of opposition."

The Party by amendments to the Address, by using every possible Parliamentary opening, on the platform, on the street corner and on the doorstep, fought "against the mean and shabby treatment which was the lot of millions while Conservative Governments were in power over the long years."

The new Constitution of the Labour Party adopted in February 1918 reorganised the structure and machinery of the Party. Following on that, a reconstruction programme "Labour and the New Social Order" was adopted in June 1918. One of the "four pillars" of this programme was "The Universal Enforcement of a National Minimum."

*The first principle of the Labour Party—in significant contrast with those of the Capitalist System, whether expressed by the Liberal or by the Conservative Party—is the securing to every member of the community, in good times and bad alike, of all the requisites of healthy life and worthy citizenship. This is in no sense a "class" proposal. Such an amount of social protection of the individual, however poor and lowly, from birth to death, is, as the economist now knows, as indispensable to fruitful co-operation as it is to successful combination; and it affords the only complete safeguard against that insidious degradation of the standard of life, which is the worst economic and social calamity to which any community can be subjected. . . . Generation after generation this has been the corner-stone of the faith of Labour. It will be the guiding principle of any Labour Government. (LABOUR AND THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER, June 1918, p. 5.)*

Now, thirty years later a majority Labour Government has provided for that social protection of the individual.

## Tory Claims

This brief record of Labour's early struggles for social security for all makes nonsense of Tory claims. Any improvements in social services for which they were responsible were brought about because they were driven to making them by the public opinion aroused and made vocal by the Labour Party.

As Viscount Kemsley wrote in the *SUNDAY TIMES* of August 1 1948:

*Looking back to previous generations from the higher levels of life now established, it is natural to ask why reforms were delayed. The reply, of course, is that they are timed by public opinion. Legislation has often lagged, but has rarely been ahead of demand.*

Tory Governments have always had the characteristics of the one so ably described by their present leader, Mr. Winston Churchill, in a speech in the House of Commons on 12 November 1936:

*So they go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all powerful to be impotent.*

## Difficult Days

In strong contrast to this drift, the Labour Government proceeded resolutely with all its great tasks despite the enormous difficulties with which it was faced. The Tory Party admitted these difficulties. An article in the official Tory monthly *THE ONLOOKER* said in September 1945:

*No British Government has ever had a more formidable task than that which faces Mr. Attlee and his Cabinet. The list of domestic problems alone is endless. Britain's embarrassments abroad at this moment call for an even greater measure of knowledge, experience and wise statesmanship.*

But when the Labour Government displayed its wise statesmanship, it was not after all to the taste of the Tories. At their Party Conference at Blackpool on 3 October 1946, Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, M.P., ex-Attorney-General, said:

*If I have seen one thing clearly—and no one in hell or on earth will prevent me expressing the view on every possible occasion—it is that I have seen the country sacrificed to Socialist shibboleths and its people crucified on a cross of dogma.*

Some of the shibboleths were the National Insurance and the Industrial Insurance Acts which had just been passed, and the National Health Service Bill which was nearly through.

## Labour and Tory Records Compared

1924—The short-lived minority Labour Government made many improvements in unemployment insurance such as increased benefit, inclusion of additional dependants, abolition of certain conditions.

1925—The Tory Government wiped out nearly all the improvements introduced by the Labour Government. In succeeding years they worsened the conditions of unemployment insurance both by legislation and administration.

In this they were of one mind with the employers. In their evidence before the Blanesburgh Committee set up in November 1925, every one of the employers organisations asked for a reduction in the unemployment benefit to the 1920 level.

1924—In July the Labour Government set up a Royal Commission on National Health Insurance which reported in 1926. The Minority Report (Labour) wanted various improvements in sickness benefit which have only now (1948) been achieved.

1928—The Tory Government embodied several of the Majority Report recommendations, mostly on relatively minor points, in the National Health Insurance Act, 1928, but many of the more important ones it refused to accept. For instance, on April 28 1928, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Minister of Health, said:

*Owing to financial stringencies it was not possible in this Bill to provide for dependants' allowance, although he agreed they would be a valuable extension.*

1929-31—The Labour Government (again a minority one) passed two Acts to improve Unemployment Insurance. The 1930 Act, although comprehensive, was regarded by the Government as a first step towards the complete overhaul of the insurance system. Certain grave injustices in the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Pensions Act were remedied in 1930.

In the Labour Party's 1929 General Election manifesto, a pledge was given that the grave injustices in the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Pensions Act would be immediately remedied and

*as soon as the urgent legislation for dealing with unemployment had been carried through, a comprehensive co-ordination and extension of*

*all the pension schemes would be undertaken so as to give an opportunity to many classes of persons now excluded to come in.*

A Cabinet Committee was set up to examine the whole question, but before anything could be done, the Labour Government was swept out of office.

1931—The Tory dominated National Government cut benefits, increased contributions and, meanest and cruellest of all the indignities heaped upon the unemployed, brought in the Means Test.

In any national emergency the Tories have always economised at the expense of the most defenceless section of the population. Their cry is the weakest to the wall.

What they have done in the past they will do again if they are given chance.

In the economic crisis in the summer of 1947, the thoughts of a not so die-hard type of Tory as Sir John Anderson, M.P., ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, turned at once to the measures of social security the Government had already brought into force. Here is what he said in the House of Commons on 7 August 1947:

*One of the first steps the Government took on coming into office was to bring into operation a system of family allowances and almost simultaneously greatly to improve the old age pensions of the people in this country. I do not blame them over much for that, I think they acted hastily.*

The employers too. In September, 1947, the National Union of Manufacturers demanded that:

*Schemes of social betterment however desirable in themselves will have to be deferred until happier times and until we can afford them. (DAILY HERALD, 9 September 1947.)*

**National Insurance Benefits**

The following are the standard weekly benefit rates under the new Act, with comparable rates under the old schemes.

	New Scheme	Old Schemes	
<b>Unemployment—</b>	s. d.	s. d.	
Man without dependants	26 0	24 0	Agriculture, 22s.
Man with wife and child	49 6	45 0	" 41s.
Single woman ... ...	26 0	20 0	" 18s. >
Married woman (ordinary rate)* ... ...	20 0	20 0	" 18s.
<b>Sickness (first six months)—</b>			
Man without dependants	26 0	18 0	
Man with wife and child	49 6	18 0	
Single woman ... ...	26 0	15 0	
Married woman (ordinary rate)* ... ...	16 0	13 0	Additional Benefits paid by some Approved Societies
<b>Sickness (after six months)—</b>			
Man without dependants	26 0	10 6	
Man with wife and child	49 6	10 6	
Single woman ... ...	26 0	9 0	
Married woman (ordinary rate)*	16 0	8 0	
<b>Maternity—</b>			
Gainfully occupied women	36 0		None
Other women ... ...	for 13 wks 20 0 for 4 wks		None
<b>Widowhood (first 13 weeks)</b>			
Widow without children	36 0		10 0
Widow and child ...	43 6		15 0
<b>Widowhood (after 13 weeks)</b>			
Young widow with no children ... ...	None†		10 0
Widow and child (widowed mother's allowance)	33 6		15 0
Widow aged 50 at death of husband, or 40 when widowed mother's allowance ceases ...	26 0		10 0

	New Scheme	Old Schemes
Orphanhood ... ...	12 0	7 6
<i>Old age</i> —†		
Single man ... ...	26 0	10 0
Man with wife under 60	42 0	10 0
Pensioner's wife, over 60	16 0	10 0
Single woman or widow...	26 0	10 0

\* A married woman insured in her own right may get 26s. a week if living apart from her husband and getting no financial help from him, or if she is mainly maintaining him.

† 10s. if married to insured man before 5 July 1948; 26s. if incapable of self-support by reason of infirmity.

‡ The new rates are only paid from retirement to men aged 65-70 and women aged 60-65, but are increased for work after age 65 (men), 60 (women).

### Grants

	New Scheme	Old Schemes
<i>Maternity</i> ... ...	£4	£2 (plus an extra £2 for an insured married woman)
<i>Death</i> — Ordinary rate ... ...	£20	None

### Industrial Injuries

The following are the Benefit Rates under the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act 1946, with comparable rates under the old scheme:

	Industrial Injuries Act 1946			Workmen's Compensation Acts	
	Injury Benefit first 26 weeks	Disablement Benefit		First 13 weeks	After 13 weeks
		Basic maximum rate (see Note [ii])	Maximum rates with unemployability supplement		
Single man or woman...	s. d. 45 0	s. d. 45 0	s. d. 65 0	s. d. 35 0	s. d. 40 0
Single man or woman with adult dependant	61 0	45 0	81 0	35 0	40 0
Married man ... ...	61 0	45 0	81 0	40 0	50 0
Married man with child	68 6	45 0	88 6	45 0	55 0

**Notes :**

- (i) Sickness benefit (including allowances for one adult and one child) under the National Insurance Act is payable to an industrial pensioner during periods of incapacity, subject to certain conditions.
- (ii) A constant attendance allowance of up to 40s. a week may be paid to a person with maximum pension.
- (iii) If the accident is fatal the scheme provides pension allowances or gratuities for certain dependants as compared with a lump sum (maximum £400 or £700 if there were children) under the Workmen's Compensation Acts.

**Contributions**

The main weekly rates of contributions, which include a payment towards the cost of the National Health Service, are as follows:

	Class 1 Employed Person*			Class 2 Self-employed	Class 3 Non-employed
	Employee	Employer	Total		
Men over 18 ...	4 11	4 2	9 1	6 2	4 8
Women over 18 ...	3 10	3 3	7 1	5 1	3 8
Boys under 18 ...	2 10½	2 5½	5 4	3 7	2 9
Girls under 18 ...	2 4	1 11	4 3	3 1	2 3

\* Including, for Class 1, the contributions for Industrial Injuries Insurance at the following rates:

	Employee	Employer	Total
Men... ... ... ...	4d.	4d.	8d.
Women ... ... ...	3d.	3d.	6d.
Boys under 18 ... ...	2½d.	2½d.	5d.
Girls under 18 ... ...	2d.	2d.	4d.

**National Assistance**

Scale rates of assistance (in addition to a reasonable sum for rent in all cases) under the National Assistance Act, 1948, compared with old rates for unemployment assistance and supplementary pensions:

SOCIAL SECURITY

	New Rates	Old Rates	
	National Assistance	Unemployment Assistance	Supplementary Pensions
Husband and wife ...	8. 0 40 0	8. 0 31 0	8. 0 35 0
Single householder ...	24 0	18 0	20 0
Other persons— aged 21 or over ...	20 0	15 6	17 6
Aged 18-21 ...	17 6	12 6	12 6
Aged 16-18 ...	15 0	12 6	12 6
Aged 11-16 ...	10 6	10 6	10 6
Aged 5-11 ...	9 0	9 0	9 0
Aged under 5 ...	7 6	7 6	7 6

In addition, for blind or tuberculous people, 15s. will be added to the rate. For a married couple both of whom are blind the rate will be 65s. a week.

### Cost of the Social Security Schemes

The following figures, issued by the Ministry of National Insurance on 30 June, 1948, show the estimated annual cost of the Social Security Schemes.

Service	Approximate Annual Cost	Source		
		Taxation	Contributions	
	£m	£m	Workers	Employers
Family Allowances ...	60	60	—	—
National Insurance ...	454(a)	118	177	138
Industrial Injuries ...	29	5	12	12
National Assistance ...	65(b)	65	—	—
National Health ...	275	239	31	5

(a) £21 million will be met by interest on the Reserve Fund.

(b) This includes £28 million for Non-Contributory Old-Age Pensions.

## Progress Report

On 5 July 1948,

- (i) 3½ million employed, self-employed and non-employed people became insurable and liable to pay contributions under the new Insurance Schemes.
- (ii) There were 3½ million old-age pensioners already drawing pensions at the new scheme rate of 26s. (instead of 10s.) for insured men and women and widows over sixty; and 16s. for wives over sixty.
- (iii) 100,000 claims were due for increases of 16s. in the retirement pensions of men whose wives were under sixty.
- (iv) 103,000 widows with at least one young child had their pensions increased from 15s. to 33s. 6d. per week.
- (v) 20,000 claims had been received from widows under sixty, but incapable of self-support for an increase in pension from 10s. to 26s.
- (vi) 234,000 unemployed men and women had their benefits increased to 26s. for an insured man or woman, plus 16s. for a dependent wife and 7s. 6d. for a first child.
- (vii) 850,000 sickness payments were increased to the new rate—26s. for an insured man or woman. For the first time an allowance of 16s. was paid in respect of a dependent wife and 7s. 6d. for a first child.
- (viii) The maternity benefit was increased from £2 to £4 for each child (£8 for twins, and so on). In addition an attendance allowance of £1 will be paid for four weeks. Or, if the mother is in employment outside the home, she will be entitled to claim, instead of the attendance allowance, a maternity allowance of 36s. a week for 13 weeks.



# HEALTH

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1 POVERTY & HEALTH

2 THE WAR & AFTER

3 NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

4 IMPROVING THE SERVICE

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In the past, the health of the people was not regarded as a public responsibility. Each citizen was expected to look after himself. A hundred years ago this idea broke down, at least in the field of environmental services; the realisation that epidemics attacked the rich as well as the poor led to improvements in sanitation, control of water supplies and many other measures making for cleaner towns and less infection.

In the personal health services, the idea of public responsibility advanced much more slowly and painfully. The low standard of Boer War recruits ultimately led to the establishment of school medical services and school meals. Our limited National Health Insurance scheme, introduced in 1911 against violent opposition, was an attempt to improve the health of factory workers. The First World War showed the need for free V.D. services and for better maternity and child welfare facilities. The Second World War gave the impetus for the establishment of our present National Health Service.

## Poverty and Health

But doctors can do little where social conditions produce ill-health. Poverty proved a greater obstacle than lack of medical services. Good housing and—even more—good food are the conditions for a healthy nation. Therefore, the poorest did not get their full share in the general improvements in health which were achieved since the early years of the century.

The infant mortality rate is the most sensitive measure of a people's health. At the beginning of the century, more than 150 babies died during the first year of life among each thousand babies born. In 1916-20 the rate was 90 in England and Wales and 99 in Scotland, but by 1936-40 these figures had gone down to 55 and 76 respectively. But in 1938—to give only two examples—the rate was 35 in Oxford and 99 in Wigan. The poorest children did not benefit as they should

from social advances and medical science. In 1931 the infant mortality of Class V (unskilled labourers) was almost as high as the rate for Class I had been in 1911, and the relative gap between these two classes was as great, if not greater, in 1931 than it had been in 1911. The mortality rates for infectious children's diseases revealed the startling fact that for children aged one to two years in Class V measles were 18.8 times, whooping cough 7.4 times, bronchitis and pneumonia 6.7 times and diarrhoea and enteritis four times as deadly as for children in Class I.

Much of this mortality and of ill-health between the wars particularly among mothers and children, was a result of malnutrition. Sir John Orr estimated that before the war over half of the nation's children were inadequately fed. An investigation in the Rhondda Valley in the years 1935-7 showed that mortality among mothers who received additional food during pregnancy was only 1.63 per 1,000 births and mortality among their infants only 57 per 1,000 live births, while the rates for those not receiving additional food were 6.15 and 102 respectively.

Evacuation in 1939 revealed poverty, neglect and ill-health among mothers and children on such a scale that the whole nation received a shock.

### **The War and After**

During the war there was a remarkable improvement in the health of mothers and children in spite of family upheavals, bombing, disorganisation in many social services, particularly the school medical service. This is vouched for not only by medical statistics, but also by the personal experience of teachers and doctors. The explanation: mothers and children received better food.

Fewer mothers died. Maternal mortality in England and Wales fell from 3.10 per 1,000 total births in 1939 to 1.43 in 1946.

Fewer babies died. Infant mortality in England and Wales fell from 50.6 in 1939 to 43.0 in 1946. Still more remarkable: the rates for still-births and deaths during the first month of life which had shown little improvement for years, fell substantially, the first from 38.1 per 1,000 total births in 1939 to 27.0 in 1946 and the second from 28.3 in 1939 to 22.0 in 1946.

School children are taller and heavier. An investigation among 395,000 elementary school children in England, Wales and Scotland shows an average increase in height of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, and

in weight of 1½ to 2 lb. as compared with prewar figures for the same age groups.

These improvements are mainly the result of:

Full employment and higher wages leading to better feeding, especially among the poorest sections of the population.

The National Milk Scheme, covering all expectant and nursing mothers and all children under five and providing them with sufficient milk at a very low price (now 1½d. per pint) or free. Although ordinary consumers are rationed and many get less milk than before the war, the average milk consumption per head of the population rose from 3 pints per week in 1938 to 4½ pints in 1947 (increase of over 50 per cent).

A great extension of the school meals and milk service. The number of children receiving school dinners has increased tenfold (and is still increasing); the percentage of children receiving milk in school has risen from 55 to 89 per cent (July 1947) since the beginning of the war. Since September 1946 school milk is provided free.

The National Vitamins Scheme, under which mothers and young children receive various food supplements, particularly orange juice (at low price), vitamin tablets and cod liver oil (free).

## National Health Service

With the start of the National Health Service on 5 July 1948 the idea of public responsibility for the people's health, which has always been part of the Labour Party programme, has been carried into practice.

*We are seeking here not merely to provide services for those who are sick, but to make a healthy nation. (Mr. Attlee, B.B.C. Broadcast, 4 July 1948.)*

The National Health Service, although it is part of the great scheme of social security, is not based on insurance conditions. It is financed mainly from rates and taxes, and it removes completely the money barrier between the patient and the medical services he needs.

*Everyone—without exception and without distinction, whether in the National Insurance Scheme or not—will be eligible for all that is available. (Mr. Aneurin Bevan. NEWS CHRONICLE interview, July 1948.)*

The service covers everything needed to cure disease and promote health. All the facilities which grew up piecemeal in the past and often worked without co-ordination, are being welded into one national

service. Mental and physical health will no longer be separated, but brought closely together. Health services hitherto given as a charity will be claimed as a right, and their traditional association with the poor law will cease.

*We are setting out to end the Poor Law and to ensure that the atmosphere of the "workhouse" will finally disappear from our social system.* (Mr. A. Bevan. NEWS CHRONICLE, 5 July 1948.)

Once again the wail goes up from some of the Tories that we cannot afford these services:

. . . We must postpone some of the most expensive items of health, education and insurance . . . but quite sincerely we cannot afford it. Peter Roberts, M.P., 10 March 1947.)

*I think that in this particular year of great financial stress and difficulty it is quite wrong . . . that we should introduce this scheme.* (Viscount Hinchingbrooke, M.P., 7 April 1948.)

Before the war it was estimated that sickness was costing the nation at least £300 million a year, to say nothing of the mental anguish undergone by the sufferers. This means nothing to some of the Tories. Apparently they prefer to see the old system carry its impossible load.

. . . If the appeal is National Savings for a State-owned medical service, I would turn it down. (Viscount Hinchingbrooke, M.P. DAILY MIRROR, 26 September 1945.)

The general medical practitioner, in his role as personal health adviser and family doctor, will be at the basis of the scheme. Through him the citizen will get access to any specialist services he may need. Ultimately all the local health services, including general practitioners, dentists and clinics, will work from health centres which are properly equipped for the purpose. This will enable doctors and the members of other health professions, to work together for the good of the patient under the best possible conditions. For the time being it will only be possible to establish a limited number of experimental centres, but progressive local authorities are already drawing up plans and working out interim schemes.

. . . Patients are entitled under the new Health Service, without restriction, to every kind of drug and appliance necessary for their treatment. Indeed, any doctor who failed to prescribe these drugs would be breaking his terms of service. (Mr. A. Bevan. House of Commons, 24 June 1948.)

This is the answer to those who believe that "expensive medicines" are reserved for the private patient.

Almost 3,000 hospitals have passed into national ownership and under regional administration. The Opposition in the House of Commons criticised this action, while at the same time giving excellent reasons in support of it.

. . . But surely the main reason for the inadequacy of hospitals, the out-of-dateness and old fashionedness of the equipment and buildings is simply that the finance has not been available. (Richard Law, M.P., 30 April 1946.)

. . . Nobody will deny that a large number of voluntary and even of municipal hospitals are inefficient and ill-equipped. (Sir H. Morris-Jones, M.P., 30 April 1946.)

The work of the hospitals is now being planned and co-ordinated within each region, so that patients can be sent to the hospital which is best suited to deal with their particular complaint. Competition between hospitals and duplication of work, which were frequent in the past, are now avoided. Hospital doctors will be paid for their work and will therefore no longer rely on private practice as their only source of income.

The clinic services of local authorities are working as in the past, but the great differences in the standard and scope of such services between different areas will be gradually eliminated. National responsibility means that a first class service must ultimately be available in every part of the country.

## **Improving the Service**

Some people say that the Service should have been postponed until more doctors, nurses, hospital beds and many other necessary resources were available and until health centres could be provided. The answer is: If there are shortages, the more reason is there to make the best of what we have got and to see that the best possible use is made of all our resources for those who need them most. Our first job is, therefore, to organise and co-ordinate them as efficiently as possible; to eliminate the waste of duplication and maldistribution; and to see that need—and not money—decides what people get.

As long as the expansion of medical services depends mainly on the citizens' ability to buy them, there will never be enough. Measured by need, there has always been a shortage; large sections of the people have never been able to get all the medical service they needed (or only as a charity which they did not want) and delayed treatment far too long. This applies not only to the people with small incomes; the cost of private medical care is so high that many people in the middle classes

could not afford it, without hardship. The National Health Service, based on the idea of public responsibility, provides the strongest possible incentive—and also the means—to overcome the present shortages.

Today there are not enough doctors. As Mr. Bevan pointed out in the *NEWS CHRONICLE* interview quoted earlier:

*The shortage of doctors in the country is not new. We must train more. A doctor should be able to give adequate time to each patient; today most doctors have far too much to do. The number of dentists could probably be doubled. The shortage of nurses is proverbial. At the end of 1947 over 60,000 hospital beds in England and Wales were unstaffed. This was the situation at a time when the total available beds in hospitals were far from sufficient to meet the demand and when waiting lists at many hospitals were disquieting. The hospital surveys carried out in every region during the war revealed the need for tens of thousands of additional beds and they also showed that many obsolete hospitals and public assistance institutions should no longer be used.*

*Do not expect too much, do not complain too much just because the avenues of complaint are now open and public. Let the infant service find its legs first. (Mr. A. Bevan. NEWS CHRONICLE, 5 July 1948.)*

Until hospitals and health centres can be built and until more health workers can be trained, we must see that the service is run as efficiently and democratically as possible and help to make it acceptable to all classes of the population. The existing shortages involve considerable dangers, not only by placing restrictions on the Service, but also by providing the conditions for abuse. To give the scheme a good start and ensure the co-operation of all concerned, a number of concessions have been made. Most doctors and many other health workers are not yet conditioned to the work of a public service. General practitioners and specialists will be allowed to do private work in addition to their public work—and the tradition of private practice is strong. In the past, doctors had to subsidise their limited insurance income from private practice; this will now no longer be necessary because the public service pays them well. In addition, there will be more chance for the public to make its voice heard.

*Every time a maid kicks over a bucket of slops in a ward, an agonised wail will go through Whitehall. . . . The order paper of the House of Commons will be filled with questions, and for a while, it will appear that everything will be going wrong . . . as a matter of fact everything will be going right because people will be able effectively to complain. . . . What the Health Act will do after 5 July is to put a public megaphone*

*in the mouth of every complainant so that he will be heard all over the country.* (Mr. A. Bevan, 27 March 1948.)

The public service has been introduced for the express purpose of destroying class distinctions in medicine and provide the very best for everyone. It must not be allowed to become "second best," either in fact, or even in the minds of the people.

*We are not going to obtain from the National Health Service the best results possible, except by the utmost vigilance on the part of the whole Socialist, Co-operative and trade union movement.* (Mr. A. Bevan, TRIBUNE, 2 July 1948.)

## LEISURE SERVICES

- 1 LABOUR'S AIM
- 2 EXISTING FACILITIES
- 3 THE TORY VIEW
- 4 MUSIC AND THE ARTS
- 5 PHYSICAL RECREATION

*For the worker the term recreation is synonymous with freedom. . . . Recreation is for him the kingdom of perfect freedom. It is the field where he can do whatever he likes in whatever way he likes. . . . Any social policy concerning recreation should preferably be indirect and must be very discreet, providing the choice on a larger and richer scale, and not influencing in a direct way the making of such a choice. . . . Recreations are the last refuge of the lost freedom of the modern man, and therefore they should be kept free from regimentation.\**

The Labour movement has no hesitation in endorsing Professor Zweig's statement. How we use our spare time is our own business, so long as we do not interfere with others, but unless full facilities are available for us to enjoy ourselves in any reasonable way we choose, the good life will escape us.

### Labour's Aim

The aim of the Labour party, therefore, is to remedy the deficiencies which capitalist and Tory neglect have left. Generations of struggle

\* Zweig, F., *Labour Life and Poverty*.

have reduced the working week from over 60 hours to about 45 hours for a considerable proportion of the people, and even less for many others. In 1948 some 15 million workers have holidays with pay, probably three times as many as in 1939. It is necessary to provide fully for the enjoyment of those increased hours of leisure. There is a wider field, too, which is concerned with the attainment of a rich and satisfying life for all. Capitalist industrialism has produced economic insecurity, ignorance, squalor, drabness and ugliness, in which such a life is virtually impossible for the broad mass of the people.

Through its policy of planned and increased production, full employment, and fair shares of what is produced, so ensuring physical health and well-being, self respect and self confidence, through providing work and homes for all and replacing chaotic and unaesthetic physical development by dignified and ordered building, as, for example, through the Town and Country Planning Act, the Labour movement is creating the framework, the essential setting for better and happier leisure hours. Without such order and grace in their surroundings it is of no use trying to encourage people to take an interest in beauty and knowledge in their spare time, or to develop their physical capacities without proper nourishment.

### **Existing Facilities**

Tory Governments which failed in easier circumstances than we now face to provide such an essential setting were also complacent about the immediate facilities available to the people for the full use of their leisure. While exclusive amenities were available to those with adequate leisure, training and money, provision for the underprivileged was very limited. Some examples will illustrate this.

Many towns have no theatre. In the whole country there are scarcely half a dozen opera and ballet companies. Of nearly 300 towns with populations of over 30,000, only 46 have halls seating more than 1,500. Gramophone record lending libraries are extremely limited. Continental films can very rarely be seen outside London.

It is the same on the athletic side. In the words of the National Fitness Council "only a fraction of the population has any access to facilities for systematic practice in athletics." In London, before the war, the ratio of applications for football pitches to the number available was four to one. There were 50 towns, each of over 25,000 people, without a swimming bath.

The more purely social facilities have been equally neglected. Too many pubs are just profit-making drink shops (brewers' net profits in

1946-7 were £49 million). A wartime survey by the National Council of Social Service showed there were fewer than 90 Community Centres directly affecting together only 65,000 people. There have been few good cafés, games and rest rooms open in the evenings.

Even where certain leisure facilities exist they are rarely satisfactory. Over three-quarters of our museums had to exist in 1938 on expenditure, including salaries, of under £300 p.a. each. Many halls—e.g. the Royal Albert—have not good acoustics. Sports grounds often lack proper showers, canteens, etc., or are badly sited. Youth clubs and societies rarely possess decent premises. Information about leisure facilities is very uneven. Cinemas and mass entertainments are well advertised, but libraries, film societies, art galleries, rambling and cycling clubs, boating facilities, and objects of historical interest or natural beauty are rarely publicised.

Leisure time has therefore been largely exploited by those sponsoring gambling, drinking and exhibition facilities. Passive forms of recreation have been encouraged not merely because people are tired and bored after the largely mechanical and monotonous work which many have to perform, but because they are profitable to private enterprise.

The job of the Labour Party is to change this by diminishing the private profit aspect, providing new public facilities and through education and propaganda encouraging people to widen their interests.

The most significant thing the Labour Government has done in this connection is to give county, district and borough local authorities general powers under the Local Government Act 1948 to provide any entertainment or leisure facilities, within the limits of a 6d. rate. This amounts to an additional £8 million available throughout the country for these purposes.

### **The Tory View**

This clause was not liked by the Tories and they forced several divisions in Committee to limit its operation. Individual Tories disliked it completely. Possibly Mr. Marshall, M.P., was expressing more than his own views when he said:

*I am very well acquainted with a borough which only recently embarked on running its own municipal dances within a 2d. rate. They are very successful. The excuse given for running these dances is that they will be able to get enough money from them to be able to run symphony concerts next winter. That may sound all right, but does the House seriously believe that in order to bring culture to the masses we must, shall I say, with great respect, pander to their cheaper desires for*

*entertainment . . . I think it is a very cheap and low form of appeal to be asked to run such entertainment for the masses in order to provide cultural entertainment for the rest of the people . . . I firmly believe that the entertainment which it is now suggested local authorities should engage in up to a 6d. rate is best provided by private enterprise.* (House of Commons, 19 February 1948.)

For a mixture of snobbery and a doctrinaire amoral profit-making attitude it would be difficult to improve on this. Apparently no public body should run a financially successful public entertainment. He added:

*I still think that the present facilities for the promotion of public entertainment are ample, without adding to them in any way.* (House of Commons, 19 February 1948.)

Labour rejects this attitude. Public and voluntary organisations, like the Arts Council and the Central Council of Physical Recreation are being encouraged and as resources become available much more will be done.

## **Music and the Arts**

It needed the war for the establishment of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, now the Arts Council. In the year ended 31 March 1947 the Council spent the whole of the £350,000 grant made by the Treasury for its work. This was an increase of nearly 50 per cent upon the expenditure of the previous year. In the year 1946-7, for example, the Arts Council provided or guaranteed 1,551 concerts. It has fostered, sponsored, encouraged and promoted the theatre and fine arts in all forms. Further increases amounting to £428,000 in 1947-8 and £575,000 in 1948-9 have been granted by the Treasury. In addition, the Government has taken over the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, for the Arts Council.

## **Physical Recreation**

The Central Council of Physical Recreation is the nearest equivalent on the athletic side. This was initiated by voluntary bodies and it was not until just before the war that the Tory Government paid much attention to such work. In the year ended 31 March 1947 the Ministry of Education and the Scottish Department gave the Council over £60,000, an increase over the previous year, and the Council spent more than £76,000 in the promotion of physical recreation. Its work is to improve the physical and mental health of the community.

It was able in 1946, for example, to open the first National Recreation Centre at Bisham Abbey, near Marlow. Courses and conferences are held there during the winter and spring, and in the summer, physical recreation holidays are arranged for young people who wish to improve their personal performance in various activities under the guidance of expert coaches.

The work of such central organisations is most commendable, but more is needed in the localities. In this connection the North Staffs. scheme is most significant. The plan is to set up a regional organisation to co-operate with all the associations interested in recreational activities and to encourage and facilitate the development of local cultural pursuits based upon the needs and resources of the region. The Labour Government is anxious to do all it can, financially and otherwise, to aid such schemes. Local initiative is being helped to the full by the advice and material resources of the centre. A happier as well as a more prosperous Britain is being built.

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## **FOOD AND NUTRITION**

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- 1 WORLD FOOD SHORTAGES
- 2 FOOD—PREWAR
- 3 FOOD IN WAR AND AFTER
- 4 FOOD AGREEMENTS
- 5 HOW MUCH DO WE EAT?
- 6 OVERSEAS FOOD CORPORATION
- 7 FOOD SUBSIDIES
- 8 CALORIES

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The Tories try to blame the Labour Government for the postwar food shortages. But the fact of the matter is that the whole world is short of food. Only the self sufficient food producing countries can manage without food restrictions.

In Britain we are not self supporting. There are 10 acres of land per head of population in America, 2 acres to each citizen in France; but in Britain we have only one acre per head of population. We depend, therefore, on imported food supplies.

### **World Food Shortages**

The World shortage of food was accentuated by the harsh winter of 1946-7 and the dry summer of 1947. World production of bread grains in 1947 was one tenth less than before the war.

*Preliminary estimates of the 1947 crop provide a gloomy picture of the world food position from now until the 1948 harvest. . . . Food consumption per head in general is expected to be nearly 10 per cent below prewar levels.* (SALIENT FEATURES OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION. United Nations Department of Economic Affairs, January 1948.)

*I am almost tired of having to say over and over again, but the pure naked fact is that the world is heading for a famine in oils and fats, not only in the primitive tropical regions, but also and even more so, in Europe and the other importing countries.* (Mr. W. A. Faure, Director, United Africa Company, December 1947.)

*The state of partial famine is affecting nearly half the population of the world and causing untold misery and suffering.* (Sir John Boyd Orr, then Director of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 26 August 1947.)

This shortage is not a temporary thing which one good harvest can correct. The world population increased by 200 million between 1939 and 1947—and it is continuing to increase. On the other hand, the productivity of some food producing countries is declining.

*The loss of soil fertility, and soil erosion, is the biggest problem facing mankind today.* (Sir John Boyd Orr, 10 June 1948.)

As a result

*Even if there were a good harvest in Europe and elsewhere this year, the world food shortage would still continue.* (Sir John Boyd Orr. Paris, 20 May 1948.)

*The increasing world food shortage is a greater threat than the atomic bomb.* (Sir John Boyd Orr, 20 May 1948.)

Ernest Bevin, Labour's Foreign Secretary, directed the attention of the whole world to this problem in his first major speech to the Assembly of the United Nations in London on 17 January 1946:

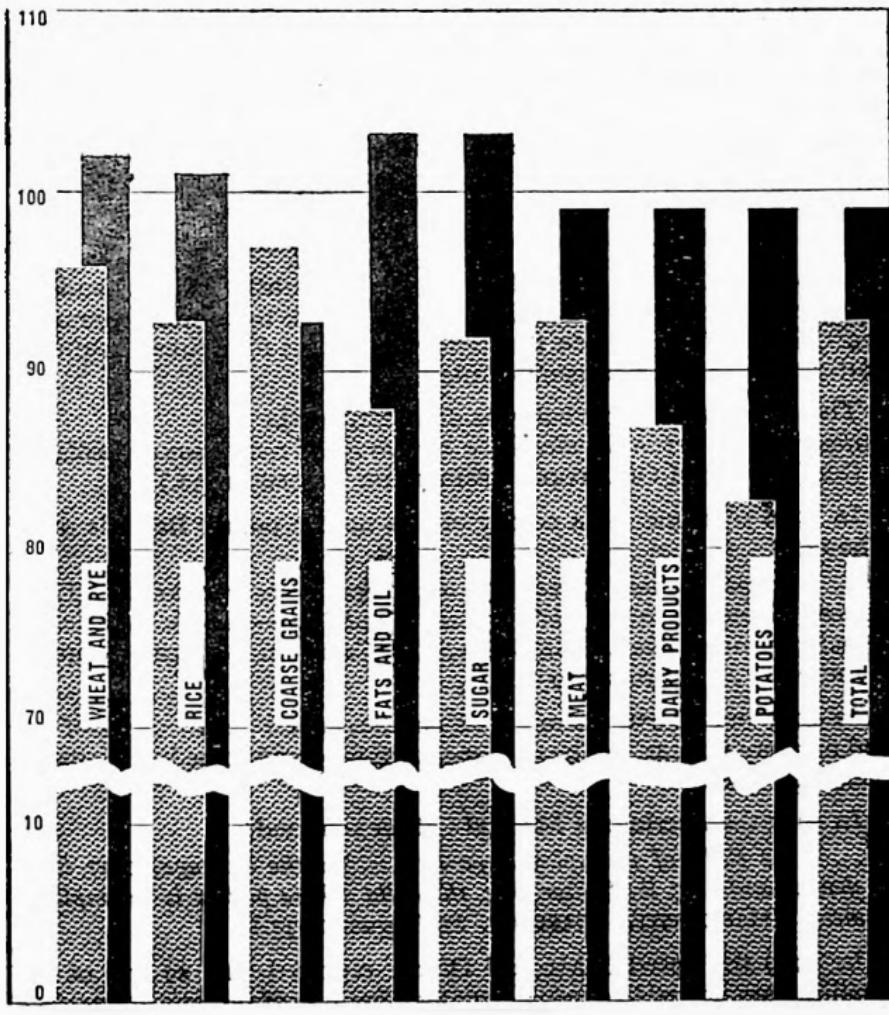
*Shortages of food will create problems, moral and physical, which it will take years to overcome. I urge the Assembly to appreciate the seriousness of the situation and to give an example of international effort by making common sacrifices to surmount this transitory difficulty.*

Since then Britain has supported the work of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, stepped up home food production\* and developed overseas resources\*\*.

\* See section on Agriculture, page 121.

\*\* See below Overseas Food Corporation page 72.

# WORLD FOOD PRODUCTION



1947/48 as a percentage of pre-war

1947/48 as a percentage of 1946/47

Source: International Emergency Food Council

## Food—Prewar

The Tories insist that Britain was better fed before 1939. True, some Britons—the wealthier families and people who had reasonable incomes and steady jobs—probably had a wider variety of food. But poorer Britons and their children were not so fortunate.

In 1936 the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN commenting upon the 1935 report of the Chief Medical Officer to the Minister of Health, had this to say:

*As is to be expected, the areas where malnutrition is most evident are those where unemployment has been most widespread. . . . In Durham County nearly 23 per cent of the children are below normal, compared with 4 per cent in more prosperous Essex. (22 December 1936.)*

Sir John Boyd Orr's researches in 1936 shows that wealthier families drank three times as much milk as the poor; ate three times as many eggs; eight times as much fruit and vegetables; four times as much butter and nearly twice as much meat.

The diet of the poorer half was deficient, but in the wealthier group the diet has a surplus of all constituents considered (Sir John Boyd Orr. FOOD, HEALTH AND INCOME, 1936.)

In 1936 someone fed a colony of rats on the poorer Briton's diet. The rats

. . . showed stunted growth and other signs of poor nutrition. They were susceptible to two chief classes of ailments—namely pulmonary and gastro-intestinal. (Sir Robert McCarrison. BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, 29 February 1936.)

In 1936 out of 476 unemployed families investigated, 9 out of 10 had no more than 4s. per head to spend on food and some had no more than 2s. a head.

In 1937 the Accrington Medical Officer reported:

. . . the child of unemployed parents is, on the average, 0.97 inch shorter and 1.73 lb. lighter than the child whose parent is in employment. (MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, 21 August 1937.)

In 1939 the Ipswich Medical Officer reported that 59 out of 97 families investigated had insufficient food because of shortage of money. From the DAILY HERALD, 5 July 1939:

*"If only something could be done to make it possible for me to have a really good meal now and again I should be so grateful," said an old man who had worked in the same firm for 50 years.*

These random quotations show that large numbers of Britons were inadequately fed before the war. The 2 million unemployed and their families, and the 1½ to 2 million on poor relief suffered from lack of food to a greater or lesser degree.

## Food In War and After

The Tories claim that under war-time Minister of Food, Lord Woolton, the nation was better fed than it is today.

It is important to remember that during the war we were helped by Lend-Lease.

*Between the end of April and the end of December 1941 we received a quantity of Lend-Lease food approximately equal to an average month's imports from all sources. This is really an under-statement because the Lend-Lease goods were exactly what we needed to improve our diet.* (Major G. Lloyd George, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Food. House of Commons, 3 March 1942.)

The Dominions and Colonies sent food without payment. Other countries allowed us to run into debt. Admittedly the U boats had to be reckoned with, but our naval and air operations reduced their effectiveness.

Tories claim that Labour has bungled our food supplies, but that Woolton never bungled. There was, however, the great potato muddle of 1940-1:

*. . . the Ministry of Food has now started to buy low grade potatoes . . . and these are being offered to stock feeders. . . . These potatoes are sprayed before delivery with a violet dye, which is quite harmless to animals* (*The Times*, 9 December 1940.)

Woolton was then satisfied that there would be enough potatoes to go round.

But, later the same season, after the potatoes had been dyed and fed to animals:

*The scarcity of potatoes continues to cause great anxiety and no hope is held out of any immediate improvement.* (*The Times*, 8 July 1941.)

Then there was Woolton's Green Vegetable Scheme in 1942-3. This was such a failure that no report has ever been issued. It has been estimated that it cost the taxpayer £½ million.

Although Woolton introduced rationing and fair shares, it was usually only after considerable pressure from Members of Parliament and public opinion. The late Eleanor Rathbone, Independent M.P.,

summed up Woolton's conduct of the Ministry of Food as follows during a debate in the House of Commons.

*And it is monstrous that there should be such gross inequalities as there are at present. . . . I do not think that the Ministry of Food is being conducted with anything like due regard to that principle of justice and equality of sacrifice.* (30 April 1941.)

When the war ended, Lend-Lease stopped. Britain had to pay her way. Although the American Loan and Marshall Aid helped (see Overseas Trade, pages 116-118), we were still in a worse position than during the war, because the liberated countries of Europe were competing with us for the scarce food supplies. For example, food from Lend-Lease reached only the few European countries not in German hands. Food from Marshall Aid has to be shared between 16 European countries.

Abolition of controls in America, and the world food shortage, caused world prices to rocket. This gave us less food for our dollars. It meant that food purchases in dollar countries had to be watched carefully and in some cases, curtailed. This particularly affected bread grains and sugar.

## Food Agreements

As a result, Britain has had to shop carefully in the world's markets. Here is a list of recent food agreements.

*Australia.* October 1947: 37½ million bushels of wheat, the first since the war.

*December 1947:* We buy all Australia's surplus beef, lamb and pork.

*February 1948:* Australia to increase shell egg shipments for the next five years.

*Canada.* December 1947: Canada to send us wheat and all surplus eggs, cheese, beef and bacon.

*Russia.* December 1947: 750 thousand tons of feeding stuff to build up home supplies of meat, eggs and poultry.

*Argentine.* February 1948: 420 thousand tons of meat; three times as much maize and barley as in 1947; large amounts of lard and cattle feed.

*Holland.* February 1948: Increased supplies of eggs, bacon and dairy produce.

*Denmark.* February 1948: 40 thousand tons of butter; 22 thousand tons of bacon; 18 thousand tons of eggs.

*Poland.* March 1948: More bacon, eggs and other essential food.  
*Eire.* January 1948: Scheme for increased egg shipments.

June 1948: All surplus beef for next four years; 7 thousand tons of poultry; 27 or more thousand tons of bacon a year; 20 thousand or more tons of butter a year. Britain to take prewar quantity of 400 thousand fat sheep and lambs or more.

The Tories dislike these food agreements because they involve bulk purchase.\*

*A Conservative Government would have made it clear that there would be no policy of cheap food imports such as we are trying to get from the Danes to undermine home agriculture. (Conservative Weekly Newsletter, 21 December 1946.)*

## How Much Do We Eat?

In May 1948 we ate 4 lb. of meat for every 5 lb. prewar: 9 oz. of fat for every 10 oz. prewar: about half our prewar bacon and ham. We ate 5 lb. of fish for every 4 lb. prewar: we ate more dried fruit, more jam and more potatoes, more bread, cakes and flour. We are drinking 3 pints of milk today for every 2 pints prewar. For example, in 1939 the people of Cardiff drank 11,000 gallons a day. In 1947 they drank 20,146 gallons a day.

But, it may be asked, if, as a nation, we are eating almost as much of some things and more of others, why do food shortages appear so obvious today? Because before the war millions of Britons could not afford the food they needed. Now, thanks to full employment, social security and increased wages, people can afford the food they need. This has increased the demand. Sir John Boyd Orr has stated that higher wages in America, for example, have increased the demand for food by 15 per cent over 1939.

In Britain it is estimated that, to abolish rationing altogether, we shall need 40 per cent more food than in 1939.

## Overseas Food Corporation

In a further effort to increase world food production, Labour is developing hitherto neglected areas.

The two major schemes so far developed are the East African Groundnuts scheme, and the Queensland pig scheme.

The Groundnuts scheme aims at clearing and planting 3 million acres of Africa with groundnuts, the oil from which will be used

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\* See section on Overseas Trade, page 120.

to make margarine. When the scheme is established, it will produce enough oil for 260 million lbs. of margarine each year.

The importance of this scheme is underlined by the following quotation.

*Europe will this year be short of 2 million to 2½ million tons of fat. That is the equivalent of 5 million to 6 million tons of groundnuts.* (W. A. Faure, Director, United Africa Company.)

Due to rising world prices, the scheme is costing more than was originally estimated. The Tories are trying to make political capital out of this. But the men on the job say:

*It is really appalling that there is still such a lack of realisation of the dangers of the situation, and it makes me boil with indignation when this great scheme, to which everyone at home and abroad should give his fullest support, is being made an object of political squabbles.* (W. A. Faure, United Africa Company.)

The second major endeavour of the Overseas Food Corporation is the Queensland pig scheme. The Corporation announced on 3 March 1948 that half a million acres of Australia would be turned over to intensive pig production. This area will provide millions of pigs each year for the British table.

### Food Subsidies

Labour's policy has been to keep food prices down by means of subsidies, which in July 1948 were running at the rate of £470 million a year.

*We need only think of what the effect would be on the sharing out of the foodstuffs of the country if that expenditure were stopped and food subsidies ceased to exist. There is no doubt that the steep rise in food prices which would take place immediately would sharply cut down working-class consumption of food.*

*Therefore, it would be a most attractive proposition for some people, because it would mean that probably very little food rationing through coupons would be necessary. It would mean that those who had the money to spend on the higher priced foods would find that they were far more readily available than they are today.* (John Strachey, House of Commons, 12 July 1948.)

Even at the rate of £400 million a year provided for in the Budget of April 1948 these subsidies were

*equivalent to something like 12s. to 14s. a week for every family in the country.* (Sir Stafford Cripps, 6 April 1948.)

The Tories would abolish food subsidies.

*. . . the Chancellor should make a determined effort to deal with the running sore of the food subsidies. (Sir John Anderson, 7 August 1948.) The case for some cutting down of cost-of-living subsidies is, I believe, quite overwhelming . . . I do not believe a perpetual dole for everybody will have any place in the life of this sturdy community. (Sir John Anderson, 17 November 1947.)*

The Tories claim that the subsidies are paid for out of taxation and that therefore no one gains in the long run. But most of the taxes come from the wealthier people, from profits tax and super tax, whereas the benefit of the subsidies is felt amongst working class families. Food subsidies are a method of redistributing income and ensuring fair shares.

### Calories

At the beginning of 1948 there were fears that the calorie intake would drop below 2,700 per day.

*That was because of the balance of payments crisis which struck this country in August and because that meant we had to stop all purchases of foodstuffs from the United States. Added to that was the fact that it was one of the worst potato harvests on record. (John Strachey, 12 July 1948.)*

The Government immediately took steps to compensate for loss of imports from America.

*It was done first and foremost by . . . switching from dollar sources for foodstuffs to sterling and other currency sources. (John Strachey, 12 July 1948.)*

As a result the calorie level remained almost exactly at 2,800, but Labour is not satisfied.

*I would say that 2,800 calories is by no means too much. It is a low figure. (John Strachey, 12 July 1948.)*

But it is nonsense to suggest, as the Tories do, that we are starving. *Making due allowances for age, sex and occupation, our calorie requirements . . . work out at just about 2,700 a head. We are still on or above the safety line for calories. . . . There are no signs of malnutrition. (Mr. B. Woolf, Lecturer in Medical Statistics, Usher Institute, Edinburgh, 14 December 1947.)*

# JOBS AND EARNINGS

- 1 UNEMPLOYMENT—THEN AND NOW
- 2 TORY VIEWS ON UNEMPLOYMENT
- 3 THE DISTRESSED AREAS
- 4 TAKING WORK TO THE WORKERS
- 5 DEVELOPMENT AREA PROGRESS
- 6 THE TREND OF EARNINGS
- 7 TRADES DISPUTES

## Unemployment—Then and Now

*Between the wars, there were never fewer than 800,000 unemployed in this country, reaching nearly three million in 1932-3, an average over 20 years of 1,750,000. This was equal to a lowering of the standard of life of 10 per cent, a loss of £300,000,000 in capital investment each year, and 35,000,000 man years of misery. (Mr. Aneurin Bevan, at the Durham Miners Gala, 25 July 1948.)*

The table which follows tells the same story in terms of average percentages of insured workers unemployed in Great Britain in each of the years 1921 to 1938.

*Percentage of Insured Workers Unemployed*

1921	...	...	16.6	1930	...	...	15.8
1922	...	...	14.1	1931	...	...	21.1
1923	...	...	11.6	1932	...	...	21.9
1924	...	...	10.2	1933	...	...	19.8
1925	...	...	11.0	1934	...	...	16.6
1926	...	...	12.3	1935	...	...	15.3
1927	...	...	9.6	1936	...	...	12.9
1928	...	...	10.7	1937	...	...	10.6
1929	...	...	10.3	1938	...	...	12.6

The Tories never tire of pointing out that unemployment more than doubled during the period of the second minority Labour Government of 1929-31. But they always omit to say that unemployment

continued to rise long after the Labour Government went out of office. More than this, they always conceal the fact that

*interwar unemployment reached a peak in January 1933 under the so-called "National" Government when no less than 2,955,000 workers, or 23 per cent of the total insured, were registered as unemployed.*

Indeed, after 1933, unemployment never fell below the two million mark until July 1935. Thereafter, except for a brief period in the summer of 1937, the total remained consistently above 1,500,000 until May 1939 when war was almost upon us.

Since the war, apart from a few weeks during and following the fuel crisis in the early months of 1947, unemployment in Great Britain has only rarely exceeded 400,000. During the fuel crisis, unemployment

*rose to 2,373,000, including unemployed persons who were not drawing benefit. The figure of 2,373,000 represented 15.5 per cent of the insured population. It stood at that figure for a week or so. But in 1921, there was an average of 16.6 per cent of the insured population unemployed throughout the year. (Mr. Hugh Dalton. House of Commons, 10 March 1947.)*

In November 1921, three years after the end of the first World War, no less than 1,792,000 workers were known to be unemployed. A further 252,000 were on short time. In the same month, as many as 906,618 persons were in receipt of poor law relief, including a large number who had exhausted their title to unemployment benefit.

By contrast, at mid-June 1948, fewer than 274,000 workers or, 1½ per cent of the total insured, were unemployed in Great Britain. Moreover,

*a high proportion of this unemployment was of short duration. About 60 per cent of those unemployed last December (1947) had found work by March (1948) and against the figure 274,000 unemployed in June there were 490,000 unfilled vacancies registered in employment agencies. (Sir Stafford Cripps, 14 July 1948.)*

## Tory Views on Unemployment

Despite the lip-service which they pay (especially at election times) to the idea of full employment, the Tories accept unemployment as part of the natural order of things. Typical of the callous and cruel complacency which they displayed between the wars are these remarks of Neville Chamberlain:

*I do not think that any thoughtful member of this House now believes that the maladjustments which have brought about this world-wide unemployment are likely to be corrected so rapidly and so completely that we can look forward with any confidence to the reduction of unemployment to a comparatively small figure, within, shall I say, the next ten years.* (House of Commons, 16 February 1931.)

Again, three years later:

*I do not imagine that we can ever destroy unemployment because the advance of science shows us how to substitute machinery for human labour.* (7 July 1934.)

In other words, the unemployed, like the poor, we have always with us. But wait, there is method in Tory madness. Mr. Walter Higgs, ex-Tory M.P. for West Birmingham, speaking in New Zealand in February 1947, had this to say:

*Before the world gets back to normal we must have eleven people wanting ten jobs and eleven firms wanting ten orders. . . . Empty bellies are the one thing that will make Britons work.*

The same point was put with rather more refinement by Sir Graham Cunningham in an article in the FINANCIAL TIMES of 30 July 1946. He wrote:

*In saying that full employment is not practical politics what is meant is that industry must have a pool or reserve of labour on which to draw . . . the only effective sanction to procure discipline, stabilise wages and improve efficiency is the fear of unemployment.*

This attitude is an insult to the integrity of British workers. While admitting the need for a careful study of the problem of incentives under conditions of full employment, Labour stands for a positive approach based on new conceptions of management and an extension of industrial democracy, and not the inhuman compulsions of hunger and poverty.

## The Distressed Areas

The most sordid and tragic chapter in the Tory record between the wars concerns the depressed or, as they came to be called, "special" areas, namely Scotland, South Wales, Durham and Tyneside, and West Cumberland. All four areas were dependent on a few heavy industries:

*Half the insured population of the North-East coast were engaged in mining, iron and steel and shipbuilding; in South Wales, one third were*

*employed in the mines and 11 per cent in steel and tinplate. About half Scotland's population was dependent on shipbuilding, iron and steel and coal. . . . Apart from the temporary and transient postwar boom, which collapsed in 1921, these areas were more or less continuously depressed in the years between the wars.\**

Even during the years of so-called recovery after 1933, unemployment ranged from 23 per cent in the Scottish area to 33 per cent in West Cumberland, as against an average of 14 per cent for Britain as a whole. Expressed in another way, unemployment in the Special Areas averaged 500,000 between 1934 and 1938.

### Taking Work to the Workers

Since 1945, much has been done to bring new industries to these prewar bastions of despair, now more positively known under the Distribution of Industry Act of 1945 as Development Areas. Six in number, they include the four prewar Special Areas, Durham and Tyneside, South Wales, West Cumberland and Scotland, together with South Lancashire, and the Wrexham area of North Wales.

The Distribution of Industry Act had as its forebears the Barlow Report, the 1944 White Paper on Employment Policy (Cmd. 6527) and not least, the Labour Party's 1937 report on the Special Areas. Credit for most of the labour and preparation behind the Act must go to Hugh Dalton, who as President of the Board of Trade in the Coalition Government, piloted the Bill through its earlier stages in the House of Commons. Tory support for the Bill was, to say the least, lukewarm. Indeed one Tory M.P. described it as

*the very antithesis of private enterprise. This is bureaucracy and Socialism carried to the last limit. (Sir John Wardlaw-Milne, House of Commons.)*

The Act gives the Board of Trade power to acquire and prepare land in the Development Areas for industrial building, and itself to build factories. The Board may also make loans to non-profit making trading estate companies to provide industrial premises, while the Treasury may give financial assistance to firms opening up in the areas. In addition, the Treasury may provide grants and loans for the improvement of basic services and amenities.

\* TAKING WORK TO THE WORKERS. By Margaret Stewart (Fabian Society 1946).

## Development Area Progress \*

Up to 30 June 1948 3,454 projects for new factories and extensions to existing factories in Great Britain had been approved by the Board of Trade. The total cost of these projects was estimated at £173,000,000. Of the total number approved, 1,183 were in the Development Areas, and these should eventually provide employment for 115,000 men and 102,000 women. The total cost of the Development Area projects was estimated at £89,335,000. Thus more than half, by cost, of all new factory building is planned to take place in the Development Areas which have less than one-sixth of the country's working population. By contrast, in the five years before the war, new factory buildings and extensions in the Special Areas represented less than 10 per cent of new factory building in the country as a whole.

By the end of June 1948, 443 of the Development Area projects had been completed, and building work started on a further 519. The distribution of these totals between the various areas was as follows:

Development Area	Building Work Started	Factories and Extensions Completed
North Eastern ... ...	147	144
West Cumberland ...	17	17
South Wales ... ...	138	96
Wrexham... ... ...	3	4
South Lancashire ...	29	11
Scottish ... ... ...	185	171
Total ... ...	519	443

The projects completed so far in the Areas, together with the wartime factories allocated to civilian production, have provided more than 100,000 new jobs. In all the Areas, however, building programmes have been hampered by shortages of labour and materials, especially steel. Nevertheless the Areas continue to enjoy preferential treatment within the reduced volume of industrial building postulated in the White Paper on CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN 1948.

\* See also sections on Scottish Affairs (page 128) and Welsh Affairs (page 133)

## The Trend of Earnings

At six monthly intervals, in April and October of each year, the Ministry of Labour and National Service conduct an inquiry into the average earnings and working hours of manual workers employed in industry. The result of the earnings inquiry undertaken in the last pay week of October 1947, provides the following comparison with the results obtained in April 1947, and October 1938:

	Men Aged 21 and Over		Women Aged 18 and Over	
	Average Weekly Earnings*	Increase Since Oct. 1938	Average Weekly Earnings*	Increase Since Oct. 1938
	£ s. d.	%	£ s. d.	%
1938 October ...	3 9 0	—	1 12 6	—
1947 April ...	6 3 5	79	3 5 3	107
1947 October ...	6 8 1	86	3 9 7	114

\* Total earnings, before deduction of insurance contributions and income tax, and including bonus and overtime payments.

The higher percentage rise in women's earnings was due, partly to the increase since 1938 in the number of women engaged in work normally done by men and, partly to the fact that wage advances granted to women have been greater in relation to their prewar rates than those granted to men.

The averages given above are based on returns covering sixteen major industrial groups, mainly manufacturing. Detailed statistics for each of these groups (including separate averages for boys and youths, and girls, as well as for men and women) are given in the fuller report of the inquiry to be found in the April 1948 issue of the Ministry of Labour Gazette.

A number of important industries and services, including agriculture, coal mining, railways, docks and distribution were excluded from the scope of the inquiry. Fairly comparable figures are, however, available for coal mining, docks, and railways. For example, the weekly cash earnings of adult miners in October 1947 averaged £7 12s. 10d. as against £3 os. 4d. in October 1938. Allowance in kind were valued at 7s. 2d. a week in October 1947 and 2s. 6d. a week in October 1938.

Statistics compiled by the National Dock Labour Board show that in the last pay week of October 1947 the earnings of all classes of dock labourers averaged £7 17s. 1d. as against £6 7s. 7d. in the last quarter

of 1942—the earliest period for which comparable figures are available. The latest Railway Return relates to March 1947, at which date men employed in the railway service averaged £6 3s. 6d. a week. When account is taken of the flat rate increase of 7s. 6d. a week granted to railwaymen from 30 June 1947, their average weekly earnings in October 1947 were probably in the region of £6 11s. od. as against £3 8s. 9d. in March 1939.

### **Trade Disputes**

In the 36 months between VE Day and the end of April 1948, only about 8 million working days were lost through trade disputes in the United Kingdom. In contrast, during the first three years after the first World War, more than 147 million working days were so lost.

In the coalmining industry, fewer than 2 million (1,953,000) working days were lost through disputes between VE Day and the end of April 1948. In the corresponding period after the first World War, over 99½ million days were lost through disputes in the mining industry.

## **TAXES AND INCOMES**

- 1 INEQUALITY OF WEALTH
- 2 TORY BELIEF IN INEQUALITY
- 3 THE LABOUR VIEW
- 4 TAX POLICY
- 5 SUBSIDIES AND SOCIAL SERVICES
- 6 MEASURE OF REDISTRIBUTION

### **Inequality of Wealth**

The unequal distribution of wealth lies at the root of social distress and injustice. It causes inequality of opportunity and is responsible for the great variations in the standard of living of different sections of the community.

Income inequality is partly measured by the share of wages—the incomes of the poorer section of the community—in the National

## TAXES AND INCOMES

Income. The division of the National Income in 1938 and 1947 was as follows:

	1938		1947	
	£ millions	% of Total National Income	£ millions	% of Total National Income
Wages (including pay and allowances of Armed Forces) ...	1,813	38	3,865	42
Salaries ... ...	1,110	24	1,720	19
Rent ... ... ...	380	8	400	4
Interest and Profits (including farming profits and professional earnings) ...	1,404	30	2,785	35
National Income ...	4,707	100	8,770	100

The unequal distribution of incomes before the war was very marked. In 1937, more than 85 per cent of the population of this country were dependant on incomes of less than £250 a year; over 44 per cent of the national income went to less than 6 per cent of the population.

Property was even more unequally distributed. The total personal capital in Britain in 1937 was £21,000 millions. Of this total :

10 per cent was owned by about 5,000 people, or one ten thousandth of the population.

40 per cent was owned by about 240,000 people, or 0.5 per cent of the population.

66 per cent was owned by about 1,190,000 people, or 2.5 per cent of the population.

### The Tory Belief in Inequality

The extremes of wealth and poverty have always been regarded by the Tories as the natural order of things, and something to be preserved. Viscount Hinchingbrooke, Conservative M.P for South Dorset, expressed the Tory view when he declared that:

*Wealth is a better test of social and economic value than anything else.* (House of Commons, 11 May 1948.)

Sir John Anderson, a former Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, disapproves of redistribution of incomes:

*The fact that the process of taking from those who have for the benefit of those who have not means often taking from the deserving for the benefit of the undeserving, that it may encourage the slacker—that is all ignored. This process in my opinion, of so-called redistribution, is already being carried to the point at which it will defeat its own object by destroying all healthy incentives to work, to excel, to save—all worth preserving.* (MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, 23 June 1948.)

### **The Labour View**

Labour, on the other hand, believes that inequality of incomes and property is a major evil.

*Labour's ultimate objective in economic policy is the removal of unjustifiable inequalities of wealth and opportunity by the transfer of private unearned income and capital into public hands,* wrote Douglas Jay, now Economic Secretary to the Treasury, in THE NATION'S WEALTH AT THE NATION'S SERVICE (1938).

Labour has now had an opportunity to advance towards this objective. In the postwar period, Labour Chancellors of the Exchequer have been faced with a four-fold financial task: (i) to reduce taxation from the high wartime level to provide an incentive to harder work; (ii) to even out the prewar inequalities of income and property; (iii) to stem inflation; and (iv) to finance extensions in the social services.

Introducing the Autumn Budget of 1945, Mr. Hugh Dalton said, . . . there is a most widespread and natural desire for tax reduction. There is, likewise, a desire, no less widespread nor less natural, for increased expenditure upon the social services—upon housing, health and education and many other social objects. Over the years immediately ahead, within the five-year lifetime of this parliament, I hope we shall go far to satisfy both these desires.

### **Tax Policy**

The Labour Government has fulfilled this pledge. It has eased the burden on the lower-income groups in successive Budgets.

The standard rate of income tax was reduced from 10s. to 9s. in the £ in the first Labour Budget of Autumn 1945.

The earned income allowance has been increased from one-tenth to one-fifth since Labour came into power.

The rates levied on the first part of the taxable income have been reduced from 6s. 6d. on the first £165, to 3s. on the first £50 and 6s. on the next £200.

Married women have been encouraged to remain at work; in 1946, the exemption limit for the earnings of married women was increased

from £80 to £110 and in the 1948 Budget, the reduced rates on the first part of taxable incomes were applied to married women's earnings for the first time.

Personal allowances were raised from £80 to £110 for a single person, and from £140 to £180 for married couples in the Autumn Budget of 1945. In 1947, the child allowance was raised from £50 to £60 for each child.

The effect of these tax reductions and reliefs was to release 3,750,000 working people from taxation in under three years.

All sections of the community, including the middle-classes, benefited from these changes, as can be seen below:

	Taxation in 1945-6	Taxation in 1948-9
<i>Single Person:</i>		
Income of £250 a year	£ 47	£ 19
" " £500 " "	156	85
" " £1000 " "	381	265
<i>Married Couple, without children:</i>		
Income of £250 a year	27	3
" " £500 " "	126	58
" " £1000 " "	351	234
<i>Married Couple, with two children:</i>		
Income of £500 a year	76	22
" " £1000 " "	301	180
" " £2000 " "	776	540

At the same time, Labour has taxed profits and large incomes derived from investment more heavily.

*Surtax:* in the Autumn Budget of 1945, surtax was raised from 9s. 6d. to 10s. 6d. in the £ on all incomes above £20,000 a year. The total number of surtax payers has risen from 100,600 in 1936-7 to 136,365 in 1945-6.

*Death Duties:* legacy and succession duties were doubled in the 1947 Budget, but the exemption limit was raised from £1,000 to £2,000.

*Profits Tax:* the tax on distributed profits was raised from 5 per cent to 12½ per cent in the 1947 Budget. In the Autumn Budget of

1947, the profits tax was doubled to 25 per cent on distributed profits and to 10 per cent on undistributed profits.

*Special Levy:* in the 1948 Budget, a special once-for-all levy was imposed on unearned incomes of over £250 a year when the total income is above £2,000 a year. Announcing the levy Sir Stafford Cripps said:

*. . . it is undoubtedly right . . . that those who possess large capital assets should make some contribution to help the country in this emergency. Some of them are now spending those assets in a manner that is distinctly inflationary in its effect. (House of Commons, 6 April 1948.)*

The *Daily Express*, on the other hand, complained that,  
*. . . Sir Stafford has used the Budget to further Labour Policy. He has soaked the rich through the capital levy and relieved the lower income brackets. (8 April 1948.)*

### **Subsidies and Social Services**

Redistribution of incomes is not only directly achieved through taxation, but indirectly through cost-of-living subsidies and the social services.

Mr. Hugh Dalton described the cost-of-living subsidies as,  
*. . . a most timely grant-in-aid to every household budget in the land. (House of Commons, 23 October 1947.)*

Sir Stafford Cripps has stated that the food subsidies are  
*. . . equivalent to something like 12s. to 14s. a week for every family in the country, in addition to at least a like sum by way of social services. (House of Commons, 6 April 1948.)*

In order to keep the cost-of-living stable, Labour has increased the food subsidies from £335 millions at the time of the 1946 Budget, to an annual rate of £470 millions in July 1948.

These subsidies are fiercely attacked by the Tories. Sir John Anderson declared that these subsidies

*. . . were demoralising and that our economy would never be in a healthy state until they had been reduced to negligible proportions. (House of Commons, 8 April 1948.)*

The Tories would not hesitate to reduce the food subsidies. Yet in July 1948 the abolition of food subsidies would mean that bacon would cost 9d. a lb. more; the 2 lb. loaf of bread would be 7½d. instead of 4½d.; eggs would be 5d. each; milk would be 11½d. a quart; meat 4d. a lb. more; butter nearly 11½d. a lb. more; tea, 6d. a lb. more; and potatoes 2½d. more for 7 lbs.

In the same way the Tories attack the Government's expenditure on the social services.

Sir John Anderson had this to say of the Government's social security plans:

*One of the first steps the Government took on coming into office was to bring into operation a system of family allowances and almost simultaneously greatly to improve the old age pensions of the people in this country . . . I think they acted too hastily. (7 August 1947.)*

Sir Waldron Smithers, Tory M.P. for Orpington, believes that:

*All this Socialist theory about social security at the present time is fantastic. (House of Commons, 11 February 1946.)*

Lord Hinchingbrooke, M.P., went even further.

*. . . I would definitely apply economies to the social services . . . if we look at the education and physical training items . . . we find an increase there of some £30 million. . . . Then there is the enormous new item of £143 million for the National Health Service. I think that in this particular year of great financial stress and difficulty it is quite wrong. . . . There are also comparable amounts in the National Insurance Fund, and the National Assistance and Supplementary Pensions. (House of Commons, 7 April 1948.)*

These are the expenditures which the Tories would cut—they would penalise the young, the old, the sick and the needy in order to relieve the wealthy from taxation.

### Measure of Redistribution

Labour's financial policy has brought tax-relief all round, but the lower incomes have benefited more than others, as can be seen from the following table.

*Percentage of Private Incomes Paid in Taxation*

Income Group	1938	1945	1946
	%	%	%
Under £250 ... ... ...	0.2	3.3	1.1
£250-500 ... ... ...	2.5	14.5	7.7
£500-2,000 ... ... ...	11.2	31.7	19.2
£2,000-10,000 ... ... ...	29.2	52.4	46.4
£10,000 and over ... ... ...	56.6	81.2	76.4
Unallocated Private Income ...	16.3	41.2	36.0

There has been an evening out of incomes after taxation. In 1938, incomes of less than £250 a year, after taxation, represented more than one-half the total of private incomes. In 1946 they represented 38 per cent of the total. Incomes of more than £2,000 a year after taxation, represented 7 per cent of the total of private incomes in 1938. By 1946 they had been reduced to 4.2 per cent.

Taxation has encouraged the redistribution of incomes, and caused a shift in purchasing power. Incomes between £250 and £2,000 a year, which represented 28 per cent of the total of private incomes after taxation in 1938, amounted to 45 per cent of the total in 1946. Subsequent Budgets have continued this movement away from the low and the high income groups.

Labour's policy is to even-out the great disparities of income that existed in prewar days in order that all may be able to enjoy an adequate standard of living.

## PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

- 1 LABOUR'S CASE
- 2 COAL
- 3 ELECTRICITY
- 4 GAS
- 5 TRANSPORT
- 6 CIVIL AVIATION
- 7 BANK OF ENGLAND
- 8 RAW COTTON BUYING
- 9 CABLE AND WIRELESS
- 10 IRON AND STEEL
- 11 JOBS FOR THE BOYS

### **Labour's Case**

Labour's case for the nationalisation of our basic industries was outlined in *LET US FACE THE FUTURE*, the policy document which was endorsed by the electorate in 1945:

*The Labour Party is a Socialist Party, and proud of it. Its ultimate purpose at home is the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain—free, democratic, efficient, progressive, public-spirited, its material resources organised in the service of the British people.*

*But Socialism cannot come overnight, as the product of a weekend revolution. The members of the Labour Party like the British people, are practical-minded men and women.*

*There are basic industries ripe and over-ripe for public ownership and management in the direct service of the nation. There are many smaller businesses rendering good service which can be left to go on with their useful work. . . .*

*In the light of these considerations, the Labour Party submits to the nation the following industrial programme.*

1. *Public ownership of the fuel and power industries. . . .*
2. *Public ownership of inland transport. . . .*
3. *Public ownership of iron and steel. . . .*

*The Bank of England with its financial powers must be brought under public ownership, and the operations of the other banks harmonised with industrial needs.*

Labour is now well on the way to completing this mandate.

## Coal

Coal is the most important industry so far to have been transferred to public ownership.

On 1 January 1947 the nation took over an industry which had been declining for a generation. Between 1919 and 1939 manpower declined by 400,000, yearly output fell by 56 million tons, coal exports fell by 47 million tons. During the 12 years before the war, one miner in four was out of work. In 1938 workers in 80 other industries were better paid than the miners. In 1938 one miner in 400 suffered from mining diseases; one in 960 was killed; one in 230 was seriously injured; and one in three suffered minor injury. Increased mechanisation did little to improve efficiency in the pits. In 1938 they were achieving an output per manshift only 13 per cent above 1913, while Poland recorded an increase of 59 per cent, Upper Silesia of 62 per cent, the Ruhr of 64 per cent. The Dutch State mines under public ownership boosted output per manshift 101 per cent above 1913 rates.

Neither Government nor owners did anything to stop the rot. The Reid Report (1943) stated:

*. . . it is regrettable that no adequate steps were taken either by the Mines Department or the Mining Association to bring home to the industry the competitive position which was developing against it.*

The decline of the industry continued during the war due to the direction of manpower into the armed forces, and the

progressive deterioration of the pits. Here is a description of the industry as it was when taken over by the National Coal Board on 1 January 1947.

*Taking the coalfields as a whole, many collieries came over to the Board in first-class condition. Many others were in poor shape, and not a few in a pitiable condition. The wartime drive for production in the face of shortages of manpower and materials was partly responsible for this state of affairs. The financial weakness of a number of companies which, had it not been for the wartime need for production, would have closed down, was another reason. So was the shortage of highly skilled mining engineers.* (NATIONAL COAL BOARD REPORT for year ended 31 December 1947.)

Nationalisation must be judged on results. Here are the results to date:

**PRODUCTION.**—The following table shows coal production from 1919 onwards.

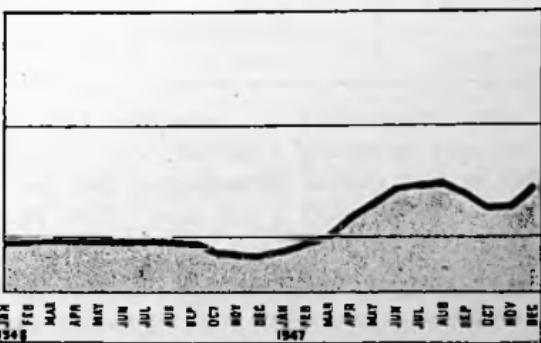
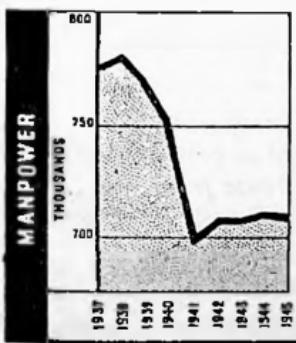
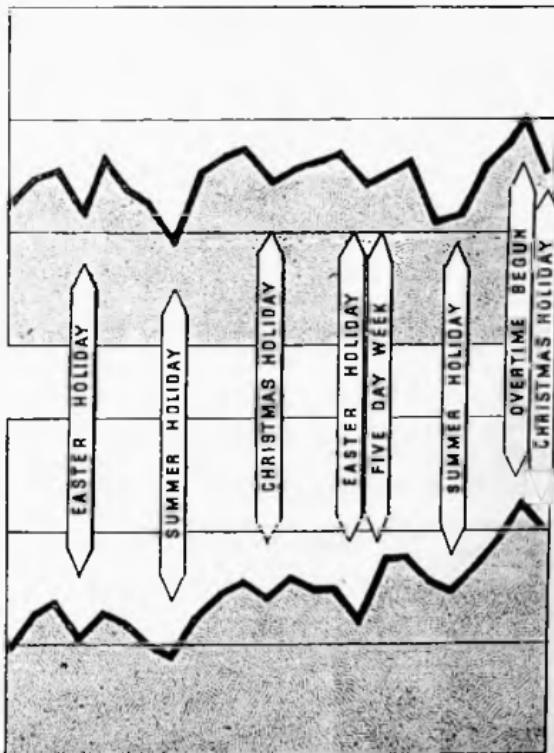
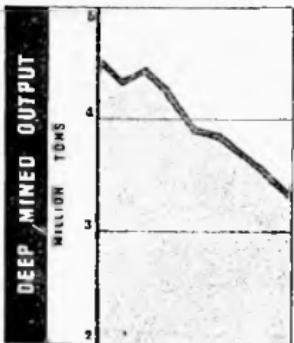
Year	Tons	Year	Tons
1919	314,113,000	1941	206,340,000
1931	147,746,000	1942	204,940,000
1935	222,240,000	1943	198,920,000
1936	228,430,000	1944	192,750,000
1937	240,390,000	1945	182,770,000
1938	226,990,000	1946	190,060,000
1939	231,340,000	1947	197,664,000
1940	224,300,000		

*The output of deep-mined coal in 1947 was just over 187 million tons, compared with 181 million tons, in 1946—an increase of 6 million tons. The output of open-cast coal . . . increased by about 1½ million tons. So we had, in all, an increase of 7½ million tons in 1947 over 1946. (Mr. Hugh Gaitskell. House of Commons, 24 June 1948.)*

It will be noted that the decline in production was continuous from 1919 until the nationalisation measures were introduced in 1946, from which date output improved—an improvement which continued through 1947 the first year of nationalisation.

# COAL OVER 10 YEARS

## WEEKLY AVERAGES



**MANPOWER.**—One of the outstanding successes of the coal nationalisation is that it has succeeded in attracting manpower to the industry. Manpower declined from 1919 onwards until 1947. The figures are:

Year	No. of wage-earners on the books	Year	No. of wage-earners on the books
1919	1,170,000	1943	707,800
1931	850,000	1944	710,200
1938	781,000	1945	708,900
1939	766,000	1946	696,700
1940	749,200	1947	711,400
1941	697,600	1948	722,500
1942	709,300	(21 weeks)	

The Nationalised industry has been criticised for acceding to the miners' justifiable demand for a five-day week. The acceptance of this demand was, however, a major factor in attracting recruits to the mines.

**OUTPUT PER MANSHIFT.**—Output per manshift, which had been declining for many years, has increased since nationalisation.

Year	Output per Manshift (all workers)	Year	Output per Manshift (all workers)
1938	Tons 1.14	1944	Tons 1.00
1939	1.14	1945	1.00
1940	1.10	1946	1.03
1941	1.07	1947	1.07
1942	1.05	1948	1.10
1943	1.03	(21 weeks)	

*Output per manshift . . . rose from 1.03 tons in 1946 to 1.07 tons in 1947—an increase of 4 per cent . . . only twice in prewar years, and then in very special circumstances, was the increase from one year to another higher than 4 per cent. (Mr. Hugh Gaitskell. House of Commons, 24 June 1948.)*

On coal stocks, Mr. Gaitskell had this to say:

*Distributed stocks, which were 8½ million tons at the end of 1946, had*

*risen to 16 million tons by the end of 1947. I think that any unprejudiced observer would say that this constituted a remarkable recovery.* (House of Commons, 24 June 1948.)

**ABSENTEEISM.**—Absenteeism which had been rising since 1938 has shown a decline under public ownership. The figures are:

Year	Absenteeism (all workers)	Year	Absenteeism (all workers)
1938	per cent 6.82	1944	per cent 13.62
1939	7.32	1945	16.31
1940	8.63	1946	15.95
1941	9.40	1947	12.43
1942	10.76	1948	11.12
1943	12.42	(21 weeks)	

**COSTS.**—Admittedly the cost of coal has risen during the past year. In 1947 the average cost of producing a ton of coal was about 4s. 3d. more than it was in 1946. This increase in colliery costs was made up as follows:

	s. d.
Increased wages and other benefits to workmen ...	2 6.4
Increased cost of materials, stores, repairs, and power	11.9
Superannuation and other benefits to officials and staff	4.2
National Insurance (Statutory Increase) ... ...	1.5
Recruitment, training, hostels and scientific expenditure	1.5
Net balance of other increases and decreases ...	1.6
	4 3.1

During the first 18 months of nationalisation, i.e. up to June 1948, coal prices had increased by 6s. 6d. a ton. But it must be remembered that the price rose by 19s. 6d. a ton during the previous five years. Of the increase of 6s. 6d. a ton well over 6s. has been passed on to the miners in wage and holiday increases, improved welfare amenities, medical services, health and safety measures, and better training and educational opportunities.

**LOSSES ON PUBLIC ENTERPRISE COAL.**—The Coal Board reported a loss of £23,255,586 on its first year's working. Some of this loss was due to the need to maintain expensive pits in production in order to win coal at any cost to meet our present requirements.

*Although altogether the collieries made a net loss of £9,200,000, many made big profits. Total colliery profits amounted to £22,000,000 and losses to £31,200,000. If the Board had been free to close unprofitable collieries it would have been easy to improve the financial results, but for several reasons—not least the need to produce as much coal as possible—this could not be done. For some years before nationalisation some collieries made big profits, while others suffered heavy losses—the final results being evened out by the operation of the Coal Charges Account. Through this Account the industry was subsidised by the Exchequer to the extent of £27,500,000 between 1942 and 1946. (N.C.B. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1947.)*

During 1948, however, the situation improved. In the first quarter, the Coal industry made a profit of £500,000.

### **Electricity**

In 1934 the McGowan Committee on Electricity Distribution reported that there were no less than 635 separate undertakings concerned with distributing electricity.

The smaller undertakings were much less efficient than the larger, area boundaries between different concerns were in many cases uneconomical, large territories in rural areas were nobody's concern and consequently electrification was inadequate, there was no uniformity of charge or of service—some areas used A.C. others D.C.

The required standardisation could probably have been attained through the formation of large private monopolies. Already, prior to nationalisation a few holding companies controlled a large proportion of the industry.

The alternative to private monopoly was to unify the industry under public ownership. This was done by Labour's Electricity Act which:

*. . . makes an indispensable service a national concern, available, as soon as physical difficulties are overcome, for industrial and domestic use, at a price strictly related to cost. (Mr. Shinwell. House of Commons, 3 February 1947.)*

### **Gas**

Gas is the third basic fuel and power industry to be nationalised. Public ownership of the industry was suggested by the independent Hayworth Committee, set up by the Coalition Government of 1944.

In its report, issued in December 1945, the Committee recommended the compulsory purchase of all existing undertakings on the grounds that the industry needed amalgamating into larger units in order to develop.

The gas industry had grown up in an unco-ordinated manner, and in the end consisted of a series of localised monopolies, subjected to a measure of Parliamentary control. The clumsiness of this type of Parliamentary control is illustrated by the fact that there were more than 2,100 Acts of Parliament relating to gas and no less than 1,172 Special Orders.

Nationalisation makes possible the development of the industry on a national basis. Labour's case rests on three propositions:

*first that the present structure of the industry is not conducive to maximum efficiency; second that the present legislative framework is a major obstacle against achieving great efficiency; third that from every angle the most suitable structure for an efficient gas industry can be achieved only by organisation under public ownership.* (Mr. Gaitskell. House of Commons, 10 February 1948.)

## Transport

*Co-ordination of transport services by rail, road, air and canal cannot be achieved without unification. And unification without public ownership means a steady struggle with sectional interests or the enthronement of a private monopoly, which would be a menace to the rest of the industry.*

That was Labour's case for nationalisation of inland transport as outlined in *Let Us Face the Future*.

There has been little resistance to the nationalisation of the railways other than Tory attempts to secure maximum compensation for the shareholders.

In 1921 even the Tory dominated Lloyd George coalition realised that some amalgamation of railway services was essential in the public interest. In that year they passed a Railway Act which merged the 120 independent lines into the four main line companies.

Nationalisation takes the process a stage further. Under unified control there will be better facilities for through traffic, administrative economy, simplified accountancy, standardisation of rolling stock, elimination of overlapping and a sound financial basis for capital development and modernisation.

Even Mr. Churchill once favoured railway nationalisation. In 1918 he said:

*So long as the railways were in private hands they might be used for immediate profit. In the hands of the State, however, it might be wise or expedient to run them at a loss if they developed industry, placed the trader in close contact with his market, and stimulated development.*

There was firmer resistance from the Tories to the nationalisation of road transport. But it is imperative that there should be no return to prewar transport chaos when goods were carried by uneconomic means. Commodities were transported hundreds of miles by lorry owners who then had to scramble for return loads while railway trucks were running empty. Nationalisation of long distance road haulage along with railway nationalisation means that the nation's transport can be run economically and without wasteful competition.

### Civil Aviation

Nationalised civil aviation has come under heavy fire from the Tories because of the loss of £10 million during the first year's operations.

Airlines have always been run at a loss. In 1923 private airlines companies were given a million pounds by the Government in order to meet their operating costs. From it shareholders were able to take dividends of 7 per cent to 10 per cent. The Exchequer continued to subsidise private airlines until 1938, in which year authority was given for a £3 million subsidy to be divided between Imperial Airways and British Airways.

In 1939 under Labour pressure, these airlines were merged into the State-Owned British Overseas Airways Corporation. £5 million were paid for the airlines and the Tory Government authorised the purchase of the shares at 7s. 6d. above their Stock Exchange value.

When Labour nationalised the airlines it was expected that there would be an annual loss of about £10 million for a period, because of the need to use stop-gap aircraft, to train crews and ground staff, and to prepare route services.

*I always thought that B.O.A.C. would suffer a loss. I don't think they could have developed the Empire routes—certainly not with stop-gap aircraft—without suffering a loss. (Lord Swinton. Tory spokesman, House of Lords, 21 January 1948.)*

During 1947-48 even the American airlines, which are quoted as an example of private enterprise, lost nearly £10 million despite subsidy

provided by Act of Congress. On the North American route, where we use American planes, British nationalised airlines fly more efficiently than American private airlines.

## The Bank of England

The Bank of England was one of the first institutions to be nationalised by the Labour Government. Winston Churchill said:

*The national ownership of the Bank of England does not, in my opinion, raise any matter of principle. . . . There are important examples in the United States and in our Dominions of central banking institutions.* (House of Commons, 16 August 1945.)

But there was a principle at stake. Prior to nationalisation, the Court of Directors nominated by private shareholders, manipulated the financial strings that controlled the flow of credit and affected Britain's overseas trade and international standing. Yet they did this without control by the Government.

*The Bank, said Captain Crookshank, Tory Financial Secretary to the Treasury in 1941, is a private concern. . . . It is not for the Chancellor to have to defend the actions of an outside body like the Bank of England.*

Because this "outside body" had such enormous economic power, Labour transferred it to public ownership and control in order to give effect to the principle that:

*To determine policy is the prerogative of Parliament.* (Lord Catto, Governor of the Bank of England.)

## Centralised Buying of Raw Cotton

Labour has also nationalised the bulk purchase of cotton for our textile industry in order that:

*There will, in future, be no opportunity for outsiders to dabble in the fortunes of this great industry. There will be no necessity for the manufacturer to become a market operator. The sole determinant of what cotton is bought for the industry will be the needs of the spinner explained by spinners. The bargaining power of the industry in the markets of the World will be strengthened; it will carry no unnecessary passengers on its back. It will receive service at cost, and thus be equipped to render in return, a full and efficient service to customers at home and abroad.* (Mr. H. Marquand. House of Commons, 2 December 1946.)

## Cable and Wireless

The Cable and Wireless Company has been nationalised on a basis determined in 1945 at the Commonwealth Communications Conference, the object of which was to secure a unification of policy and financial interest so that the telecommunication systems of the Commonwealth and India could be developed as a whole.

## Iron and Steel

The one remaining industry which Labour has a mandate to nationalise is iron and steel.

*Private monopoly has maintained high prices and kept inefficient high-cost plants in existence. Only if public ownership replaces private monopoly can the industry become efficient.* (LET US FACE THE FUTURE.)

Even the Americans, firm defenders of capitalism, have to admit that the British steel industry has suffered under private ownership.

*Although steel is one of the foundations of the British economy, the basic plants had for some years received inadequate maintenance and little modernisation. At the end of the war, the industry was inefficient by contemporary standards, although a small amount of new capacity was highly efficient.* (U.S. State Department Report on the United Kingdom's Part in the European Recovery Programme, presented in early 1948.)

Britain's recovery from war and the attainment of a higher standard of living all round depends upon a good supply of high quality low-cost steel. Due to the efforts of the workers in the industry, the output of steel is now running at an annual rate of 15½ million tons (July 1948). This in no way destroys the validity of Labour's case for nationalisation.

The steel industry is a monopoly controlled through the British Iron and Steel Federation. The result of this private monopoly control has been to boost steel prices in order to subsidise the basic inefficiency of the industry.

*The present state of affairs is disgraceful. Unless they change their methods I will go so far as to say we will buy steel outside this country. I only wish I were younger. I would set up a steel plant in this country and put them out of business.* (Lord Nuffield, August 1935.)

Geoffrey Crowther, now editor of the *Economist*, said in 1939:

*The result of Conservative steel policy has been to confer enormous advantages on the businessmen of the industry. They have been granted a monopoly and assured of its exclusivity and permanence; and they have been encouraged to use it to raise prices for their product. The*

*policy has beyond question put large profits into the pockets of steel shareholders. And it is equally beyond question that some at least of these profits have come out of the pockets of the consumers of steel—who include, directly or indirectly, almost every inhabitant of the island. But the return that the community has received for this assistance could hardly be detected with a microscope.\**

Six dominant firms control more than half Britain's steel producing capacity, and within these firms there are many interlocking directorates. These directorates extend outward to the smaller firms. In effect the directors of the six big firms control about 100 subsidiaries and have about 600 seats on the boards of other companies inside and outside the steel industry proper. At the most 100 men of big business dominate the entire steel industry.

These 100 men, therefore, control an industry basic to the whole of Britain's economy, but they govern it in the interests of the few whose sole aim is to make private profit. Labour insists that the economic power flowing from this control should not be left in the hands of private individuals answerable only to sectional interests. Public supervision of a private monopoly tends to be cumbersome, bureaucratic and inefficient. Therefore, Labour insists that the whole industry should be turned over to public enterprise.

### **Jobs for the Boys**

The Tories complain that the big jobs in nationalised industries are being handed out to Socialists. For example:

*Now this beneficent Government is changing this old-fashioned idea of service by rewarding old and trusted members of the Labour Party and Trade Unions with big jobs in nationalised and other Government industries. (RECORDER, 2 February 1948.)*

Yet even if we take the list of Socialists on the Boards of nationalised undertakings as published by the Tory Central Office on 22 March 1948, we find that only one member in seven of the Boards of Airways Corporations, National Coal Board, British Electricity Authority and its Area Boards, the British Transport Commission and its Executives, and Cable and Wireless are known Socialists. In fact, these people are on the boards, not because they are Socialists, but because they have experience suited to the job in hand.

Members of boards are appointed not according to political bias, but according to their qualifications for running the industries concerned.

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\* ECONOMICS FOR DEMOCRATS.

# CONTROLS

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- 1 FAIRNESS & ORDER
- 2 WHAT SORT OF CONTROLS
- 3 SETTING THE PEOPLE FREE
- 4 CLOTHES RATIONING
- 5 RATIONING BY THE PURSE
- 6 NEWSPRINT RESTRICTIONS
- 7 TWO MILLION BUREAUCRATS
- 8 DE-CONTROL

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## Fairness and Order

.labour's attitude to controls in the postwar period was defined by Mr. Attlee in his famous broadcast of 5 June 1945:

*During the war the Government in the national interest imposed many restrictions on the right of the individual to do as he pleased. Some of these, though necessary, were very irksome. They should be removed as soon as the necessity for them has passed away, but others are still vitally needed to protect the public from profiteers and monopolists; yet strong elements in the Conservative Party clamour as their predecessors did successfully in 1918 for their abolition. . . .*

Without controls,

*. . . there would be a rush for the available commodities. Prices would soar. Profiteers would have a good time while the general public would lose; wage and salary earners, pensioners and investors in war savings would find that their money would buy much less than they expected.*

Labour's demand for the retention of essential controls was opposed by the Tories. Mr. Herbert Morrison, broadcasting on 29 June 1945, reminded the electorate:

*Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Bracken say plainly, "Whip off the controls and let's have a lovely free-for-all scramble." They know that everyone is sick and tired of hardships and shortages; so they talk as though controls were the cause of all the trouble instead of a necessary means of ensuring fairness and order.*

## What Sort of Controls?

The more important controls operated since the war may be described under four headings:

(i) *Price controls* to prevent inflation and to give everyone, irrespective of means, a fair chance of obtaining essential goods in short

supply, especially food and clothing. In addition, since May 1947 the prices of a wide range of less essential consumer goods have been rigidly controlled as part of the drive to bring down the cost of living. Price controls have also been applied to essential raw materials to prevent their going to the highest bidder without regard to national needs.

- (ii) *Rationing.* Basic goods and clothing have been rationed as well as price-controlled. Only so could we have ensured fair shares at fair prices. Our food rationing system remains the envy of Europe where black-marketeering is still rife from one end of the Continent to the other.

*No other country, wrote a PICTURE POST correspondent in November 1947, has a rationing system that ensures regular and equitable distribution of so many foods to all people of all classes at a price within everyone's reach. . . . In Belgium, the rationing system is only partially accepted, and in France, Italy and Greece is inadequate and ineffective.*

- (iii) *Labour controls* of which the most important is the Control of Engagement Order introduced in October 1947 to help secure a better distribution of the labour force with particular regard to the undermanned industries and the export trades. The order provides a limited form of direction for people falling out of work. Such people are offered a choice of three essential jobs by the Labour Exchange. Compulsion is applied only if all three jobs are turned down. The Tories have a strong preference for the harsher compulsion of unemployment.\*

- (iv) *Raw material controls.* Important raw materials in short supply, notably coal, steel and timber, have been controlled to ensure their best use in the national interest.

- (v) *Building controls* to ensure priority for housing and other essential work, including new factories. Without these controls, the available labour and materials would, without a doubt, have been diverted to luxury uses, for example, cinemas and greyhound tracks.

## **“Setting the People Free”**

“Off with the controls” has been the most popular Tory cry of the last three years. In the House of Commons on 28 October 1947, Mr.

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\* See section on Jobs and Earnings, page 77.

Churchill applauded the removal of controls in the United States as a glorious example which this country might profitably follow. He recalled that, in America,

*. . . advantage was not taken of wartime measures to enforce the particular conceptions and doctrines of a political party. . . . In the summer of 1946 the major step was taken of making a clean sweep of almost all controls. . . . I felt fortified by what has happened in the United States . . . that the sovereign remedy for our present ills and misfortunes is to set the people free.*

The answer to Mr. Churchill and an eloquent tribute to Labour's policy came three weeks later—from the United States. On 17 November 1947 President Truman was asking Congress to agree to re-imposition of price controls over food, clothing, fuel and rents.

*Today, he declared, inflation stands as an ominous threat to the prosperity we have achieved. . . . Since the middle of 1946 fuel has gone up 13 per cent, clothing prices have gone up 19 per cent, retail food prices have gone up 40 per cent.*

The lesson of American experience was lost on Lord Woolton who, in a broadcast on 24 January 1948 blandly declared:

*I would take a risk and get rid of some of this rationing.*

The Labour view was restated by Maurice Webb, also in a broadcast, on 29 January 1948:

*For our part we will take no such risk . . . if rationing goes in the case of a commodity in short supply, those with the most money would get unlimited supplies, and those with little money would get none.*

The consequences of the Woolton type of risk as it affected the American housewife were described by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt in a B.B.C. broadcast on 14 April 1948:

*. . . we have no restrictions, no price-limits or coupons . . . because we have done away with restrictions and price levels and so forth, people can now hold their produce for higher prices . . . so the housewife who wants to find something to buy may find that the price is far above anything she can pay. . . .*

In similar vein is this extract from the *OBSERVER* for 18 July 1948: *In the meat-market, prices this weekend were leaving American housewives aghast—lamb chops 6s. a lb., steak 5s. 9d. a lb., pork and lamb joints round about 5s. a lb. . . . In a single fortnight, these prices have jumped 8 per cent. They are now a quarter as much again as a year ago.*

This is what would happen here if the Tories had their way. It did in fact happen after the First World War. After November 1919

prices rocketed upwards. Within a year, butter went up from 2s. 6½d. to 3s. 4d. a lb., bacon rose from 2s. 4½d. to 2s. 9½d., while bread went up from 2½d. a lb. to 4d.—or nearly double.

## **Why Not Abolish Clothes Rationing?**

Tory-inspired demands for an end to clothes rationing were resisted by Mr. Harold Wilson, President of the Board of Trade in the House of Commons, on 25 May 1948:

*If we did give way to the clamour in certain sections of the trade and of the Press to abolish rationing, we should be faced within a very few months with a famine in clothing which would cause us either to let the famine go on unchecked, or to meet the situation by diverting more material from the export trade . . . no one would be happier than I if I could abolish clothes rationing; I am certainly not prepared to do it at the expense of our export trade, and therefore of the food ration.*

## **Rationing by the Purse**

To those who advocated rationing by price instead of the coupon, Mr. Wilson had this to say :

*We've had experience of that before. It is a policy which will not be followed by this Government. Before we can take off clothes rationing, we need not only a temporary increase in stocks, but an assurance of production at a rate to meet all the real needs of the community. . . ."*

The Tory preference for rationing by the purse is best illustrated perhaps by their attitude to petrol rationing. For instance, Viscount Hinchinbrooke, Tory M.P. for South Dorset, made this admission in the House of Commons on 11 May 1948:

*I favour a progressive abandonment of rationing and a progressive application of the price mechanism to petrol. Wealth is a better test of social and economic value than anything else.*

In that last sentence we have the essence of Tory "freedom."

## **Newsprint Restrictions**

In recent months, the Tories have tried hard to exploit the newsprint shortage for their own ends. Import restrictions, they have argued, are nothing more than a device to stifle criticism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. L. J. Cadbury, a prominent Liberal and

chairman of the Daily News Ltd., provided the short and simple answer to this Tory campaign when, on 28 May 1948, he said:

*It is sometimes suggested that the newsprint shortage is designed to oppress the Opposition and to prevent them from putting their case to the country. This theory, however, ignores the fact that newspapers of the Left suffer equally with newspapers of the Right.*

Every effort is being made to compensate for the limitations imposed in August 1947 on newsprint imports from Canada and Newfoundland. Home production is being stepped up and there are hopes of additional supplies from non-dollar sources. It is the Government's aim to get back to

*what is called the five page newspaper as early as possible, and certainly in 1949, if that can be achieved without sacrificing food and raw materials essential to our industrial production, and without involving a further drain on our dangerously low reserve of gold and dollars.*

(Mr. Harold Wilson, House of Commons, 25 May 1948).

## **"Two Million Bureaucrats"?**

"Two million bureaucrats" is a familiar Tory taunt in any discussion of controls, but as usual, it is well wide of the mark. True, some 2,150,000 people were employed in the public service at the beginning of 1948, but this total included not only those employed in Government departments, but also local government employees, policemen, teachers, and some 300,000 industrial workers in Government dock-yards, ordnance factories and similar establishments.

At 1 April 1948, the Civil Service proper numbered 693,403 as against 715,300 in July 1945 and 382,709 in April 1939. Of the 1948 total, 246,831 (or more than a third) were in the Post Office. In other words, Mr. Jones, the postman, and Billy Brown, the messenger boy, are 'bureaucrats' for purposes of Tory propaganda.

When Post Office staffs are deducted, we are left with 446,572 civil servants, of whom 115,240 were in the Defence departments (Admiralty, War, Air and part of Supply) and 94,342 were in the social service departments, including the Ministries of Labour, Health, Education, Pensions and National Insurance. Of the 236,990 remaining, 61,539 were in the Revenue departments (Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise), and 95,089 were in the principal departments principally concerned with the operation of controls and against which taunts of 'bureaucracy' are most often directed, namely, the Ministries of Food, Fuel and Power, Supply (civilian divisions), Works, and the Board of Trade.

"Two million bureaucrats?" The figures speak for themselves. A bigger civil service than before the war? Yes, certainly, but as Mr. Attlee told the Commons on 24 July 1947:

*The days are long past when the State was no more than protector, law giver and tax gatherer. With the support of the nation, the State has shouldered many new duties in our social and economic affairs . . . the acceptance of full employment as a prime aim of policy requires staff to plan our resources in order to develop to the full the productivity of our industry.*

### De-control

Labour, while insisting on the need for such controls as will safeguard the community interest, does not believe in "control for control's sake." The Government is standing by its intention, as declared by Mr. Herbert Morrison on 21 August 1945 to use controls not as

*mere instruments of restriction, obstruction and petty interference but as positive instruments of constructive national policy.*

Many controls have in fact been abolished or relaxed in the last few months :

- (i) Potato rationing, imposed in November 1947, was abolished on 30 April 1948. But for rationing, stocks would have run out at mid-March.
- (ii) Milk rationing was suspended for three weeks when supplies became plentiful in May 1948.
- (iii) Again, in May 1948, increased supplies of clothing and footwear made possible the downpointing of a wide range of goods. In addition, children's footwear was freed from coupons altogether. Further concessions were announced in July. As from 9 August, all footwear has been free of coupons. Other articles now coupon-free include children's mackintoshes and non-utility printed furnishing fabrics.
- (iv) Also in May 1948, utility furniture was freed from doockets and made generally available.
- (v) Bread rationing, introduced in the summer of 1946, was abolished in July 1948, as soon as wheat supply prospects became sufficiently assured. Announcing the abolition, the Minister of Food said that *without rationing we should have suffered a breakdown in the supply of bread to the population, with all the grave consequences that would have involved, in April or May 1947. Even in the second year of bread rationing,*

*when rationing was probably having little effect on the level of human consumption, it still served to limit the feeding of bread and flour to animals. (House of Commons, 21 July 1948.)*

(vi) In June 1948, the licence free limit on building repair and maintenance work was raised from £10 to £100.

In addition, the remaining controls are being streamlined. The Ministry of Supply and the Board of Trade have set up committees to devise means of making the essential controls more efficient and less irksome.

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I LABOUR'S HERITAGE

## THE PRODUCTION DRIVE

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2 THREE YEARS OF PROGRESS

3 TORY PATRIOTISM

4 BRITAIN & WORLD RECOVERY

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### Labour's Heritage

*While I was in London in August 1944, Winston Churchill talked to me about Britain's future. He was exceedingly pessimistic. The day the war ended the country would be bankrupt. When Churchill went to Quebec a month later . . . he pointed out that Britain had expended its economic reserves, its very life-blood in the war versus the common enemy, and the abrupt termination of American aid would leave Britain without the resources to reprise its economy.*

Thus wrote Morgenthau, former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury in COLLIER'S magazine of 18 October 1945. In similar vein, Lord Woolton, now Chairman of the Conservative Party and then Minister of Reconstruction said in January 1945:

*Let us have combined operations to win the battle of production in peace. Combined operations of Government, employers and employees. By this means we shall win through the transition stage. But it will take time. We did not reach full war production until the end of 1942. The task of retracing our steps will in some ways be an even harder one. So the Tory leaders knew what we were up against at the end of the*

war. Churchill told the Conservative Party Conference on 15 March 1945:

*We have given our all in the common cause and may claim assistance to recover our normal economy from those we have helped to victory.*

They even knew how disastrously predominantly Tory Governments had run the country for more than a generation. Here is a confession from Lord Woolton:

*No one who has been in the Government for the last five years can be blind to the fact that the national policy during this century brought us very near to defeat.* January 1945.

Industrialists too were aware of the situation. The President of the F.B.I., Sir Clive Baillieu, said on 23 January 1946:

*Let us not underrate their [the Government's] difficulties. Time is short . . . and the task before us is stupendous.*

Even two years after the end of the war some Tory leaders were sufficiently honest to admit all this. On 7 August 1947, Sir John Anderson had this to say:

*H.M. Government are in no way responsible for the general situation with which they were confronted at the end of the war. They are in no way responsible for the state of economic and financial exhaustion in which we emerged after, regardless of consequences, pledging all our resources to the single purpose of achieving victory. Neither are H.M. Government responsible for the great inherent difficulty of expanding exports to the extent necessary to meet our economic situation. Nor are they responsible for the increased prices . . . of the imports which we have had to purchase from various markets. No doubt also the Government have had some extraordinarily bad luck. They had bad luck in the weather last winter. . . . (House of Commons, 7 August 1947.)*

Similarly, Harold Macmillan, on 26 June 1947, said he did not think any fair minded man or woman could deny that any Government taking office after six years of war had a difficult task indeed. They could not twice in a single generation inflict such hideous and gaping wounds upon Europe and then expect in two short years to restore prosperity and security which were the products of centuries.

There was an immense need of re-equipment of industry at the end of the war. As Osbert Peake, Financial Secretary to the Treasury said in November 1944:

*If we are to build up the prosperity of the country and raise the general standard of living to the level at which we should aim we shall have to*

devote in the first years of peace a large part of our resources to reconditioning the old and providing new capital equipment needed by industry. At the same time goods of all kinds must be produced for export. We cannot therefore, expect to produce for our own consumption and use in the abundance<sup>1</sup> and variety which we should like in the months and years immediately ahead. It follows that if our first needs are to be met first the patriotic citizen should for a time restrain himself from spending his current earnings as freely as he would like.

Yet Lord Woolton said on 20 October 1947:

*I ask . . . for the discouragement of all capital expenditure whether by Government or private industry.*

Labour speakers were equally aware of the difficulties facing us at the end of the war. Jim Griffiths, now Chairman of the Party, said on 18 June 1945:

*We don't promise ease and comfort; we don't offer you presents. What we offer is the opportunity for every man and woman to use their capacity to the full, whether at work or in the home.*

Similarly, Sir Stafford Cripps in a broadcast on 20 June 1945: *While we have been fighting we have been hard put to it, and we shall be after the war to get enough produced to support and protect our people. We need the same determination and self-sacrifice, and the same sense of values that have brought us to victory in the war. We know and we emphasise the difficulties that lie ahead, but we know too that the ordinary men and women of this country can overcome them if they will.*

### Three Years of Progress

Speaking in the Commons debate on European Economic Co-operation on 6 July, 1948, Mr. Douglas Jay, Economic Secretary to the Treasury said:

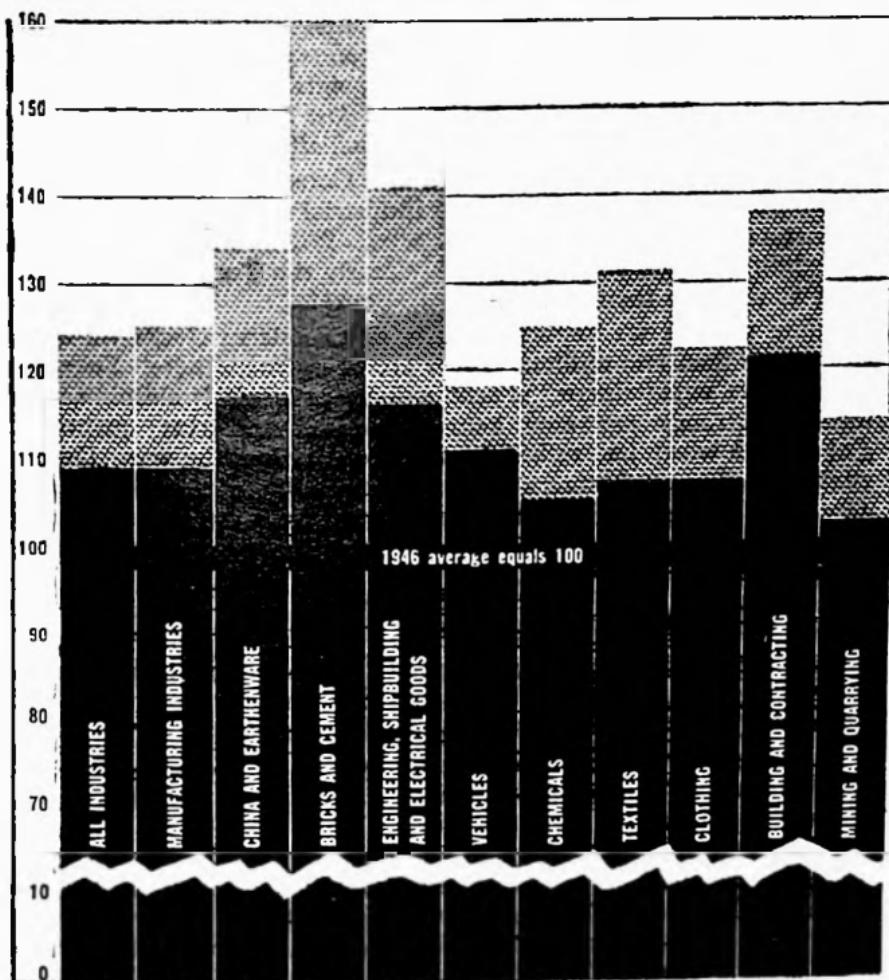
*Do not let us belittle or ignore the great achievements of the British people since the war. We are producing more than ever before, a recovery better than that of any other European country which took a major part in the war. Our total industrial production is 20 per cent above 1946.*

Clement Davies, the Liberal Leader, paid a similar tribute:

*Very rightly he [Jay] has called attention to the great increase in production in spite of worn-out machinery, plant down to nothing, difficulties of transport, shortage of shipping and a tired people limited in the amount of food they are getting. (House of Commons, 6 July 1948.)*

On the other hand, the Tory Leader in the same debate had the effrontery to say:

## INTERIM INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION



\* China and Earthenware is March 1948

APRIL 1948

† Source: Central Statistical Office

MONTHLY AVERAGE 1947

*We are in a far worse case than we were when the last shot was fired.*

Yet three weeks earlier it had been admitted in the Conservative NOTES ON CURRENT POLITICS:

*An indication of the way in which British industrial production is advancing is provided by the new Interim Index of Industrial Production: In February 1948 both overall production and production in the manufacturing industries alone were 24 points higher than the average level of 1946 (the base for the Index) 15 points higher than the average for 1947 and 4 points higher than the last quarter for 1947. . . . The general level of coal production is gradually improving.*

In July 1947, Lord Woolton said at a Conservative Party rally at Blackburn that we might get a great industrial revival, or as he feared degenerate into a third-rate Socialist State. Will he now come forward and admit his fears were mistaken? Clearly the Tory leaders do not know as much as their own backroom boys!

Before the war we imported nearly all the alarm clocks we used. Now more than two millions a year are being made here. Scientific instruments, vital to increased production, but formerly a drain on our foreign currency are now being produced in great quantities. £1½ million worth had to be bought abroad before the war. During 1948 our own manufacturers will meet almost all our needs and export £8 million worth as well. More footwear, matches, spoons and forks, household brushes, prams, radios, cycles and motor-cycles are being produced than before the war.

### Tory Patriotism

What has been the contribution of the Conservative politicians to this increased production? They have constantly cried "Woe, woe," and done all they could to spread alarm and despondency.

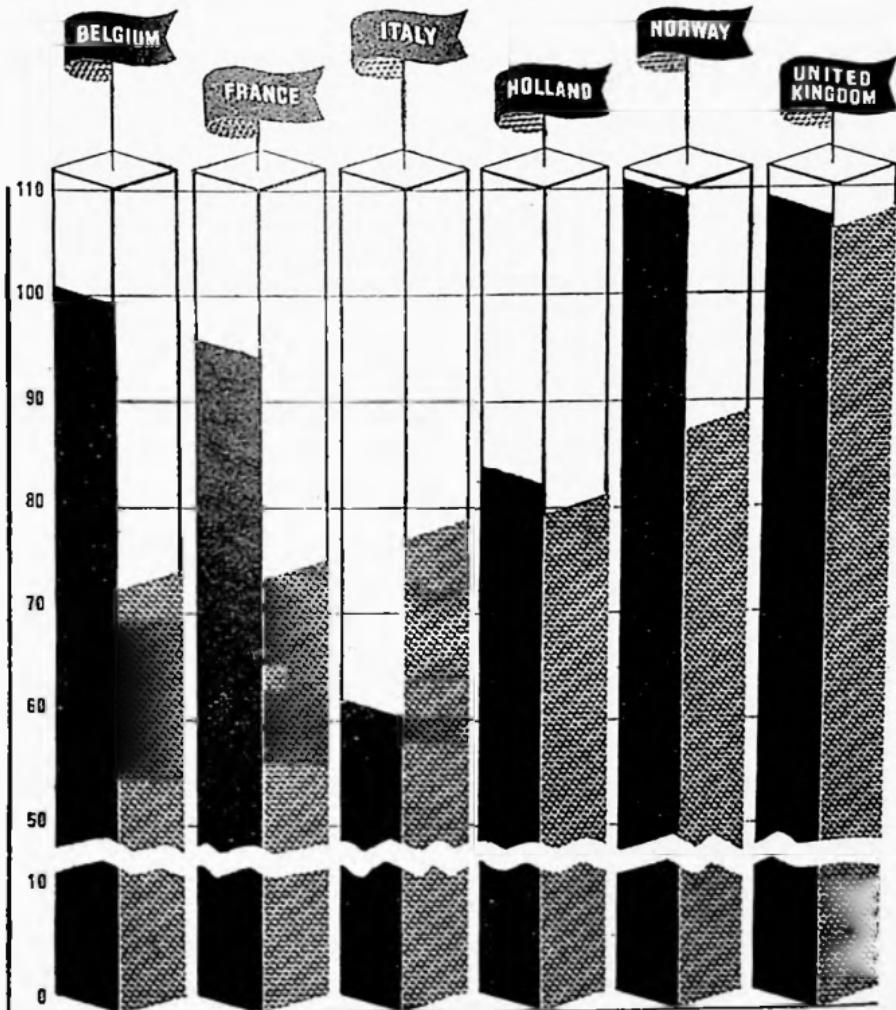
Mr. Churchill told the Conservative Conference on 5 October 1946: *In a little more than a year they (the Socialist Government) have very largely paralysed our revival at home.*

Eighteen months later he added:

*I can assure you that a continuance of Socialist experiments in theory and of their ineptitude and incompetence in practice will bring upon us not only worse privation and restrictions, but economic ruin, and not only economic ruin but the depopulation of the British Isles on a scale which no one has ever imagined or predicted.*

Other Tory spokesmen have refused to believe what even their own Central Office points out about Britain's recovery. On 22 May 1948, the Marquis of Salisbury, Opposition leader in the House of Lords, said: *Socialism is killing the country.*

# INDUSTRIAL & AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION



INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION  
Third Quarter, 1947  
1938 = 100

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION  
1946-47  
1935/8 average = 100

Source: United Nations Department of Economic Affairs

Lord Woolton, the Tory Sir Galahad, was saying on 14 June 1946: *Already the wheels of industry are slowing down. We shall within a measurable distance of time—I might say a year from now—find that the Socialist plans will so much have failed that there will be considerable unemployment.*

In fact there were less than 300,000 people unemployed in June 1947, about one tenth of those unemployed 15 years earlier under the National Government.

In fact, as the United Nations Survey for Europe shows, Britain's recovery after this war has been much quicker than it was after 1918. In the third quarter of 1947 British Industrial Production was 9 per cent above 1938. The level of agricultural production in 1946-7 was 6 per cent above the average of 1935-8. This gives a gross national production of commodities in 1946-7 8 per cent higher than in 1938, a record unequalled by any other country which had been at war. Moreover, as the Survey points out,

*the U.K. was the only one of the countries listed which succeeded in restoring exports to a level commensurate with the prewar relationship to the total volume of commodities available.*

## Britain Aids World Recovery

Britain has set a lead in increased production planned for world recovery. A few items will illustrate this.

The war left a serious world shortage of shipping. In June 1948 over 2 million tons, about one-third of which was for export, were under construction, in British shipyards, compared with little more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  million tons in an average month of 1938. This excludes over 3 million tons undergoing repairs or conversion in U.K. ports.

Land transport is equally scarce. 17,459 commercial vehicles, over half for export, were produced in June 1948, more than twice as many as in an average month of 1938.

The contribution of British production to agricultural recovery in Europe has been outstanding. As the U.N. Survey states:

*The modernisation of agriculture offers the countries of Western Europe one of the best opportunities of satisfying a higher proportion of food requirements out of indigenous production. . . . The figures show clearly the importance of the share of the U.K. in the total production of equipment. . . .*

In the first quarter of 1948 the U.K. exported £5½ million worth of agricultural tractors, machines and implements. In the whole of

1938 only 10,029 tractors were made in Britain, 57,978 were produced in 1947 and over 25,000 in the first quarter of 1948 alone.

These are the solid achievements which all save those blinded by party spite and unpatriotic selfishness have seen. The American commercial counsellor in London, speaking before the Senate on American aid, said that Great Britain had made an *outstanding effort in increasing production*: The U.S. technical experts similarly reported:

*The conversion of British economy after July 1945 was smooth and rapid.*

The Conservatives once recognised, as did others, what a task faced the nation at the end of the war. As Woolton said on 17 April 1945:

*Before the war Britain was a wealthy nation with vast overseas possessions. We have sold or pawned all of it and become the greatest debtor nation in the world.*

Now they have refused to drop their doctrinaire politics, their pathetic faith in the virtues of unrestricted capitalism and have done all they could to belittle the astounding achievement which the nation has to its credit. Occasionally they are revealingly frank. For instance, Robert Boothby, M.P., speaking at Oxford in November 1947:

*I am very, very thankful that we have not got a Conservative Government now, for there can be no doubt that bad as things are, they would be a good deal worse under a Conservative Government if one were in power at the moment—strikes, and lock-outs, and all sort of things all over the place.*

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## OVERSEAS TRADE

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- 1 BALANCE OF PAYMENTS
- 2 EXPORTS
- 3 IMPORTS
- 4 AMERICAN LOAN
- 5 MARSHALL AID
- 6 TRADE AGREEMENTS
- 7 BULK PURCHASE
- 8 PLANNING AND OVERSEAS TRADE
- 9 COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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Britain depends on overseas trade. Our population is bigger than our natural resources can support. Today the population is 50 millions. Our home agriculture could feed 25 millions. The rest of our food must be imported. Our only important raw materials are coal and iron ore. To produce the rest of the things we need, and to

maintain full employment we must import raw materials. To pay for them we must export. Also helping us pay for our imports is the money earned by our merchant shipping fleet and by insurance houses and banks.

### Bal<sup>a</sup>nce of Payments

It is wrong to assume that our adverse balance of trade is a postwar development. There was an adverse balance in 1938 which has swollen considerably during and since the war.

In 1938 the adverse balance was £70 million, in 1946 £380 million, in 1947 £675 million.

Our adverse balance has swollen because during the war we sold our overseas investments in order to raise money. A large amount of our shipping was sunk, and partly because of the abolition of price control in America, prices of the goods we need to import have risen to a greater extent than the prices of the goods we export.

If in 1938 and 1939 we had been required to pay for our imports at the prices charged today, we would have suffered in those years an adverse balance of trade twice as big as it was in 1947.

The following quotation illustrates how import prices have risen in relation to export prices.

*What we used to sell for 20s. in 1938 we can now sell for 49s. Unfortunately, the rise has been even steeper in the prices of those things we normally import, namely 170 per cent above 1938 or 54s. for what used to be 20s. before the war. . . .* (Oscar Hobson, City Editor, NEWS CHRONICLE. 13 July 1948).

Nowadays the Tories try to blame Labour for this adverse balance. But they have themselves admitted that it would have happened under a Tory Government. As Winston Churchill said during the war, as quoted by Morgenthau, ex-Secretary of the United States Treasury.

*Winston Churchill talked to me about Britain's future. He was exceedingly pessimistic. The day the war ended the country would be bankrupt, and the returning soldiers would have little to come back to. Laying the grim financial facts before Parliament after victory would make him the most unpopular man in England.*

Sir John Anderson said in the House of Commons on 7 August 1947:

*His Majesty's Government are in no way responsible for the general situation with which they were confronted at the end of the war. They are in no way responsible for the state of economic and financial exhaust-*

*tion in which we emerged after, regardless of consequences, pledging all our resources to the single purpose of achieving victory. Neither are His Majesty's Government responsible for the great inherent difficulty of expanding our exports to the extent necessary to meet our economic situation. . . .*

Lord Beveridge, speaking for the Liberals, said on 29 August 1947: *The first step to understanding is to realise that the trouble is not to any important extent the creation of the Labour Government. The next step is to realise that escape from the trouble does not depend simply or mainly upon the Government. The times make a call for action by the whole people.*

The Tories try to insinuate that this state of affairs came as a surprise to Labour and that we took no steps to avoid it. But on 29 June 1945 Herbert Morrison said:

*. . . the rest of our exports must be increased, not just by half, but in many cases by 100 per cent, 200 per cent and more. This is not scare-mongering—it is facts.*

A further complication is that although in our trade with Europe and the Sterling Area, we more or less balance our accounts, and in some cases make a profit, our trade with the dollar countries of the Western Hemisphere shows a serious loss.

There are, therefore, three things to do. We must increase our exports, decrease imports, and at the same time produce more at home.

In addition, because of the dollar deficit we must try to switch our trade from the dollar countries where the balance of payments is against us to the Sterling Area and non-dollar countries where we can better pay our way.

## Exports

The Government has set targets for increased exports. Broadly speaking, we must by December 1948 be exporting 50 per cent more each month than we exported each month in 1938. In June 1948 we were more than half-way towards this target. In that month we exported 34.3 per cent more than in 1938.

Originally the Tories admitted the need for expansion of exports. As Churchill said on 27 October 1945:

*The war has left our country beset with a multitude of unprecedented embarrassments, almost every one of which resolves itself ultimately into a question of how to make both ends meet. Upon the rehabilitation of its industries—and in particular of its vital export trade—depends*

*the nation's ability . . . to attain a tolerable standard of peacetime existence.*

Yet later, in order to make Party capital, the Tories began to deny the need for the expansion of the export trade. Churchill, as reported in the *Onlooker*, January 1946, said:

*Whoever, before our present incumbents, thought of starving the home trade as a peace time measure for stimulating exports?*

Sir Stafford Cripps summed up the position as follows, on 10 February 1948:

*We must either export and earn enough to pay for our food and raw materials, or do without. Upon our capacity to export and earn depends our capacity to work our way through these trying years.*

One result of the export drive is that the goods are not available for consumption at home. This is one of the causes of shortages and one of the factors which make inflation possible.

## Imports

In order to meet the adverse balance we have had to keep imports below their prewar levels.

In the first half of 1948 our monthly rate of import was 81 per cent of the 1938 rate.

The harshest import restrictions were imposed on the dollar imports of food, tobacco, petrol and films.

£12 million worth of dollars were saved by the cessation of food imports from the U.S.A. This food was made good, however, by switching our purchases to non-dollar countries.

In 1947 we bought 35 per cent of our food from the Empire. The first half of 1948 showed an increase to 46 per cent.

In 1947 we bought 18 per cent of our food from Europe and Russia. In the first half of 1948 this rose to 29 per cent.

In 1947 the hard currency areas of the west sold us 47 per cent of our food. In the first half of 1948 this fell to 25 per cent.

Reductions in tobacco imports save £7½ million of dollars a year, petrol restrictions save £9 million of dollars a year, and the Film Agreement signed in March 1948 saves over £8 million of dollars a year.

## American Loan

The main deficit in our overseas trade was with the dollar countries, and special arrangements had to be made to meet this in order to maintain the flow of goods when Lend-Lease stopped suddenly in August 1945. This was done by the American Loan.

The Loan, signed on 6 December 1945, provided £1,100 million of dollars. It is to be repaid over 50 years beginning 31 December 1951, with interest at 2 per cent. In order to secure the Loan, Britain had to agree to certain conditions. We had to agree that after 15 July 1947 we would allow countries holding sterling balances to take dollars in repayment. A further condition related to non-discrimination. Under this condition we agreed that if we limited the amount of any goods that could be imported into Britain, we would, except in special circumstances, apply the same limits of imports to each country affected.

Unfortunately, the American Loan and the parallel loan from Canada worth £273 million did not last as long as had been anticipated. The Loan had been based on the assumption that recovery in Europe would ease the world dollar shortage, and that therefore we should be able to pay our way for our imports of dollar and other goods with our exports to dollar and non-dollar countries. But European recovery was retarded by the bad winter of 1946-7 and the bad harvest of 1947.

About the same time, price control in America was abolished, and prices rocketed.

*The American index of wholesale prices . . . stood at 107.1 in January 1946. In July 1946 it had risen to 124.3 and in July 1947 it had risen to 150.6. That is to say, in broad figures, it had risen 50 per cent from January 1946.* (Dalton, House of Commons, 7 August 1947.)

Dollar-hungry European countries holding sterling balances took advantage of the convertibility clause in order to get hold of badly-needed dollars. The drain on the Loan increased. Up to 20 August 1947 we drew from the Loan 1,350 million dollars for direct purchases, and 960 million dollars for purchases from other countries. Ultimately, convertibility had to be suspended. Subsequently America allowed further drawings on the Loan despite the suspension of convertibility. The Loan was finally exhausted in March 1948.

The Tories accuse Labour of having frittered away the Loan. Oliver Lyttleton, speaking for the Tories, on 5 July 1948, accused Mr. Dalton of "dissipating the first American Loan."

But Oliver Lyttleton had himself previously admitted that the unexpectedly early ending of the American Loan was due to the European economic situation.

*I do not want to shirk any of the responsibility which attaches in varying degree to all those who did not oppose the American Loan and the conditions attached to it . . . we took the attitude, as I did, that*

*there was even greater . . . danger in having no Loan at all, and we hoped that two years of world recovery might make these arduous conditions at least practicable when the time came. Events have proved us over optimistic. Two years have not seen recovery; they have seen nothing but deterioration in the European economy.* (House of Commons, 6 August 1947.)

The Loan was not wasted. Of every £100 spent in America in 1946, £21 went on machinery and ships, £27 on raw materials, £25 on food for ourselves, and £11 on food for Germany.

With the Loan we bought all the essential machinery and plant American manufacturers could send us, and we bought foodstuffs and raw materials to keep British factories working.

### **Marshall Aid**

By June 1947 it became clear that Britain and Europe needed further help towards recovery. On 5 June 1947, Mr. Marshall, American Secretary of State, offered further American Aid to Europe, conditional upon European co-operation towards recovery. (For further details of the international aspects of Marshall Aid, see Foreign Affairs, page 146.)

Marshall Aid passed into United States Law as the European Recovery Programme (E.R.P.) in April 1948. U.S. Congress has allocated 5,055 million dollars to the first year of the four-year programme. About 25 per cent of this amount will be provided as dollar loans, 75 per cent will be forwarded as grants.

Great Britain's tentative allocation for the first year is 1324.3 million dollars, of which 300 million dollars in grants and 100 million dollars in loans has been offered to cover the first 3 months of the programme (April/May/June 1948).

It is generally agreed that there are no unwarrantable strings attached to the programme.

*I sum up by recommending it (Anglo-American Economic Co-operation Agreement) to the House as a fair and sensible document in no way interfering with our rights to regulate our own affairs.* (Sir Stafford Cripps, House of Commons, 5 July 1948.)

And for the Tories:

*To sum up, I think it would be fair to say that although many obligations are imposed upon us . . . they appear to us to be natural and understandable.* (Oliver Lyttleton, House of Commons, 5 July 1948.)

The Communists argue that E.R.P. allies British economy to Wall Street capitalism. But Mr. James B. Carey, Secretary General of the Congress of Industrial Organisations, says:

*We resent charges that the plan for American aid for Europe is a Wall Street scheme.*

*It has been our experience in the United States that Wall Street is not very generous; it gives nothing to anyone anywhere at any time. The programme as we see it is a willingness of the American people to make a partial repayment to the European countries of the contribution they have made in human resources to America. (DAILY HERALD, 14 February 1948.)*

The blunt fact is that we need E.R.P. assistance if we are to recover sufficiently to balance our overseas trading accounts.

*Without help from America through the Marshall Plan we just should not be able to keep up our imports of foodstuffs and raw materials in the next year or two; we could not maintain them and that would so set us back in our standard of living and in our production that it would be years and years before we could even hope to get straight.*

said Sir Stafford Cripps in a broadcast on 10 March 1948.

## Trade Agreements

The Geneva Trade Agreement signed by Britain along with most other countries in 30 October 1947, aims ultimately at the reduction of trade barriers between countries, and the establishment of multilateral trading.

The agreement provides also for the reduction of certain British tariffs in return for reductions by other countries. This will help our export drive. The agreement does not call for any alteration to the present system of Empire Preference.

The agreement recognises that full multilateral trading will not be possible until trade between Eastern and Western Hemispheres is more closely balanced. When this state is achieved, Britain as an industrial nation will stand to gain from multilateral trade.

In the meantime, however, trade has to be negotiated and agreed bilaterally between various nations.

The advantages of bilateral trading at the moment are:

*. . . it gives us a chance of getting our essential supplies . . . from countries who will take in return some of the things we have to sell . . . it ensures that when we send valuable goods of this kind abroad we get an adequate return for them. (A. G. Bottomley, Secretary for Overseas Trade. House of Commons, 2 March 1948.)*

## Bulk Purchase

Most of our trade agreements involve bulk purchase, i.e. the purchasing by the State instead of by private traders. The Tories oppose bulk purchase on the grounds that it forces prices up.

But under the Russian trade agreement, for example,

*The prices we paid for Soviet barley, maize and oats were, on a conservative calculation, about one half the price . . . on world markets.* (Harold Wilson, President of the Board of Trade, 2 March 1948.)

Similarly, the Canadian Grain agreement of 1946, the Australian grain agreement of 1947 and many other bulk purchase deals were agreed at prices well below the world level in the open market.

*. . . if we had private traders dealing in these markets, bidding up prices against one another in a period of shortage, none of them able to make offers in scarce goods which other countries want, we should have to pay far higher prices than we are actually paying.* (Harold Wilson, President of the Board of Trade. House of Commons, 2 March 1948.)

The Tories have tried to suggest that inexperienced civil servants handle our bulk buying negotiations. In fact the Government, for these purposes, uses the services of men who have vast experience in the trades concerned. For example, J. V. Rank buys cereals, Sir William Rook buys sugar, Mr. Gasper Knight, late of Unilevers, buys oils and fats, Sir Henry Turner, late representative of the New Zealand Meat Exporters, buys meat.

## Colonial Development Corporation

The Overseas Resources Development Act, 1948, established two corporations, the Overseas Food Corporation (see Food, page 73), and the Colonial Development Corporation.

The Development Corporation aims to increase productivity in the Colonies, in order to raise the standards of living and to enable the Colonies to make a greater contribution to Commonwealth trade.

The Corporation has powers to borrow up to £110 millions.

*We have received to date 34 projects from 27 Colonies . . . the proposals accepted for investigation vary in size from £100 millions to a very much larger figure. Some of the most important of these undertakings will be operated in association with commercial firms. . . . Others we shall operate ourselves, and in yet others, we shall participate*

*only by way of subscription of capital in a commercial concern covered by prior charge.* (Lord Trefgarne, Chairman of the Colonial Development Corporation. Liverpool, 22 June, 1948.)

## Planning and Overseas Trade

If our overseas trade is to be balanced, we must produce the right goods and sell them in the right places. We must also watch our imports and ensure that they tally closely with our overseas earnings. These things can only be done if our production, our export programme and our import programme is centrally planned. Tory opponents of planning would leave the whole of this delicate adjustment to private enterprise, operating upon guesswork. Nothing could more surely lead to chaos. If we are to recover at all, it can only be upon the basis of a Socialist planned economy.

# AGRICULTURE

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- 1 A VITAL INDUSTRY
- 2 TARGETS
- 3 STABILITY & EFFICIENCY
- 4 THEN AND NOW
- 5 TOOLS FOR THE JOB
- 6 MANPOWER & WAGES
- 7 PROGRESS REPORT

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## A Vital Industry

Although a major part of Britain's population lives and works in urban areas, agriculture remains one of our biggest industries. Britain is still four-fifths rural, and more than a million Britons and their families look to the land for a livelihood.

Between the wars, the farming industry was neglected by one Tory Government after another. Thousands of farmers and farm-workers left the land never to return. Between 1921 and 1939, some  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million acres of arable land were lost to cultivation; at the outbreak of war, many hundreds of farms in England and Wales were in a derelict condition.

The war brought a renewal of prosperity. Agriculture became a fourth line of defence. Whereas before the war we only grew a third of our food at home, during the war the proportion was raised to rather more than half. Since the war, agriculture has moved right up to the front line in the battle to close the gap in our overseas balance of payments. (See Section on Overseas Trade, page 113).

## Targets

Labour's plan for growing more food at home was announced in August, 1947. We aim to increase our annual output of farm produce by as much as £100,000,000 by the winter of 1951-2. This will mean an increase of 50 per cent. over prewar, 15 per cent over the wartime peak of 1943-4, and 20 per cent over 1946-7.

Particular emphasis is laid on livestock and livestock products which this country is best fitted to produce and which provide the most scope for saving dollars. By 1951-2 we aim to

- (i) treble pigmeat production;
- (ii) double egg production;
- (iii) secure a 16 per cent increase in milk production;
- (iv) increase output of beef and veal by 20 per cent;
- (v) restore our output of mutton and lamb to the level prevailing before the disastrous winter of 1946-7 when frost and snow reduced our total sheep population by 4,188,000.

The 1951-2 cropping targets provide for the following increases on prewar outputs:

	Production Targets 1951-2 (Thousand Tons)	% increase on 1936-9 average
Bread Grains (wheat and rye) ...	2,694	62
Coarse Grains (oats and barley)...	2,453	50
Potatoes ...     ...	7,700	63
Sugar Beet     ...	3,600	76

The livestock expansion programme will call for a corresponding increase in supplies of animal feeding stuffs, of which we intend to import as much as world supplies and our own financial resources will allow. To help overcome the oilcake shortage, we are growing more linseed at home and by 1951-2 we plan to have 400,000 acres of this crop as against 30,000 acres in 1947.

## Stability and Efficiency

Having set the targets, the Government has a duty to create the conditions which will make their achievement possible. This Labour is doing through the great Agriculture Act of 1947. Resting on the twin pillars of stability and efficiency, the Act aims

*at fulfilling the pledges that we have always made to restore prosperity to an industry that has suffered over twenty years of neglect and to ensure the right use of land in the public interest. (Mr. Tom Williams.)*

Stability is provided through a system of guaranteed prices and assured markets for the main farm products. Under this system, crop prices are fixed eighteen months ahead of the harvests, so that farmers know what they will get for their cereals, potatoes and sugar beet well before the crops are sown. Minimum prices for fat livestock, milk and eggs are known four years in advance. Thus, in the spring of 1948, prices were announced for crops of the 1949 harvest and minimum livestock prices were fixed right up to 1952.

In return for guaranteed prices and assured markets, the Agriculture Act

*requires of the industry, under a system largely administered by volunteers from the ranks of farmers, farmworkers and landowners themselves, a minimum standard of efficiency in good husbandry and good estate management. (Mr. Tom Williams. 3 July, 1948.)*

Efficient farming demands that farmers have at their disposal a knowledge of the most up-to-date methods. The Government is extending research into all branches of farming practice, and through the National Agricultural Advisory Service, set up in October, 1946, is providing a valuable link between the scientist and the farmer.

## Then and Now

Farmers were promised a continuation of wartime price-guarantees after the First World War. In 1920, the Tory-dominated Lloyd George Coalition raised countrymen's hopes by passing an Agriculture Act to continue the price guarantee policy instituted in 1917. Grain prices were guaranteed for a period of four years. The Act received Royal Assent in December, 1920. Six months later, in June, 1921, the Government startled the farming world with a decision to abandon their guarantee and to repeal the relevant portions of the Act without delay.

The consequences were catastrophic. Prices came tumbling down. Prosperity vanished from the countryside.

*The present condition of British agriculture, wrote the Agricultural Correspondent of THE TIMES on 16 October 1922, is so precarious*

*as to be a menace to the stability of the nation. . . . Poverty has followed plenty with a vengeance.*

Seven months earlier, Lord Bledisloe, himself a Tory and a leading figure in farming circles, had condemned the Government for their *sudden and amazing vacillation* and charged them with *abandoning the agricultural community, landowner, farmer and farmworker alike.* . . . (THE TIMES. 22 March 1922.)

By contrast, this same Lord Bledisloe, now the "Grand Old Man" of British farming, had this to say of Labour's Agriculture Bill when it was before the House of Lords:

*I extend the most wholehearted welcome to the principle of this epoch-making Bill, embodying as it does for the first time in our history a charter of stability for the nation's most vital industry. . . . For at least two generations—except, of course, in wartime—farming has been a risky and an unprofitable industry. Therefore there has been little or no incentive to farmworker, farmer or landowner to pull his full weight in the matter of maximum food production. . . . I say godspeed to this Bill and to the great purpose in many directions it seeks to achieve.*" (House of Lords, 24 June 1947.)

## Tools for the Job

Britain has more farming machinery per acre than any other country in the world. It has not always been so. In 1939 there were only 50,000 farm tractors in the United Kingdom. During the war, the number was increased to 190,000, and by 1947, no less than 235,000 tractors were in use on British farms.

The agricultural machinery industry enjoys a high degree of priority. In 1946, the total value of the machinery and spares produced was about £26 million of which £20 million worth was for the home market. in 1947 the figures were £44 million and £35 million respectively. During the first quarter of 1948, production was at an annual rate of £64 million, and rather over two-thirds was going to British farmers. The promise to British farmers of some £40 million worth is thus being kept.

## Manpower and Wages

Britain's farms need more workers. At mid-1947 there were 1,045,000 regular workers (excluding prisoners of war) on the land. The target for 1948 is 1,110,000 workers.

The manpower shortage is yet another legacy of inter-war neglect. The drift from the land began in 1921 when the Lloyd George Coalit-

tion withdrew the grain guarantees promised by the Agricultural Act of 1920. As a corollary to the guarantees, the 1920 Act established Wages Committees to fix minimum and legally enforceable wage rates for farm workers on a district basis. When the Government abandoned the grain guarantees, they abandoned the minimum wage also.

The Wages Committees were replaced by Conciliation Committees stripped of statutory powers. Farm wages fell quickly from an average of 46s. in the early part of 1921 to 36s. at the end of the year and again to 27s. in 1922. The decline continued during 1923. Poverty and despair stalked the countryside. Even Tory M.P.s were driven to protest against the intolerable conditions under which farmworkers were being forced to live and work:

*It must be admitted, wrote Lt.-Col. Norman Coates, Tory member for the Isle of Ely, that 23s. a week is no living wage for a single man let alone a married man with a family of children. (Letter to THE TIMES. 11 April 1923.)*

Low wages were accompanied by unemployment—without unemployment insurance. By the autumn of 1923, the situation was such that Stanley Baldwin, as Tory leader, had no choice but to open his General Election campaign with a confession of failure:

*In the last two years, there has been a reduction of 46,000 in the numbers of men regularly employed in agriculture—a terrible figure, four hundred and fifty men per week of fine stock and skill falling out to earn a living where they could and compete in a glutted market. (Speech at Reading, 22 November 1923.)*

The decline in wages was arrested in 1924 by a return to legal enforcement under the Agricultural Wages Regulation Act introduced by the Labour Government. Wages recovered slowly to average 31s. 8d. in 1931, although in the absence of a properly constituted Central Board, widely divergent rates were fixed in different parts of the country. Variations between countries in 1935 ranged between 28s. 6d. a week in the lowest paid to 37s. 6d. in the best.

The drift from the land continued almost up to the outbreak of war. Between 1921 and 1939, the total number of agricultural workers in Great Britain fell from 996,081 to 697,463. For every three land-workers in 1921 there were only two in 1939.

Since 1939 the farmworkers' wages and conditions have been vastly improved. The national minimum wage is now 90s. for a 48 hour week as against 70s. in 1945 and an average of 35s. for a longer working week

in 1939. This improvement is in line with the Government's general aim, as defined by the Minister of Agriculture:

*to create conditions that will enable our agriculture to recruit the labour that it needs by ordinary means and especially to strengthen its permanent labour force.*

Other measures to make the industry more attractive include:

- (i) the provision of capital assistance to enable experienced agricultural workers to become farmers on their own account. The Agriculture Act provides for loans at reasonable rates of interest to smallholders, up to a maximum of 75 per cent of the total amount of capital needed for the efficient working of their holdings;
- (ii) the improvement of rural housing.\* Farmworkers enjoy equal housing priority with coalminers and keyworkers in the development areas. Since 1945 Rural District Councils have completed 30,000 new permanent houses; a further 30,000 are under construction. In addition, 2,322 Airey Rural Houses out of a projected total of 20,000 have been completed. Lettings of new local authority houses to agricultural workers now total over 7,000 and the monthly rate of lettings has shown a remarkable improvement from 400 in January 1948 to 744 in May.

Short term measures to increase the labour force include: (i) the suspension of the call-up of farmworkers; (ii) the retention of the Women's Land Army; (iii) the drafting into the industry of 30,000 European volunteer workers and Poles, and of some 20,000 German P.O.W.s who have volunteered to remain for a time as civilians, and (iv) the organisation of harvest camps for volunteer workers.

## Progress Report

Under a Labour Government, the farming community looks to the future with hope and confidence. Farmers and farm-workers are unlikely to be deceived by the counsels of despair emanating from the Tory camp:

*I find it most astonishing and disquieting that the volume of agricultural production achieved during the war years, when the nation had to face many difficulties, has actually diminished under the baffling conditions of peace. I am told that the main cause of the falling off is the lack of*

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\* See also section on Housing, page 17.

*confidence in the future.* (Mr. Winston Churchill at Maidstone. 14 July 1948.)

Mr. Tom Williams replies:

*It is true that between 1945 and 1947 agricultural production receded to some extent from the levels achieved during the war. There were a number of reasons for this which our Conservative critics have conveniently forgotten. Farmers and farmworkers were tired after a long and strenuous battle to supply the nation with the maximum quantity of food during the war. The land was tired too. Much of it had been overcropped. . . . Then came the winter and spring of 1946-7, which was just about the worst in living memory, and this was followed by a summer of drought. The fall in the sheep population and the reduction in the tillage acreage, which has so glibly been attributed to the Government's negligence, directly resulted from the devastation of that winter, when snow and frost killed approximately two million sheep and lambs, and succeeding flood waters inundated 600,000 acres of arable land. These floods bore away the unsown harvest on their tide with much the same impetus as the tide of the General Election of 1945 had swept the Conservatives from power. No wonder they find the memory of the flood disaster a painful one.* (Speech at the Wrekin, 3 July 1948.)

Mr. Churchill's lack of confidence charge is refuted by the remarkable recovery achieved during 1947-8. In his Wrekin speech on 3 July, Mr. Tom Williams had this to say:

*There has been a very heartening increase in pigs and poultry since the expansion programme was launched. The number of breeding sows in England and Wales has risen in the last year by 60 per cent and the number of young poultry by 95 per cent. The cattle and sheep population figures are also rising, and milk production shows a most encouraging increase. The wheat acreage this year (1948) will probably be some 150-250 thousand acres more than last year and we expect that the 1947 potato acreage will be comfortably surpassed. The acreage under linseed will be almost trebled, and the total tillage acreage shows every sign of being at least a quarter of a million acres more than last year.*

# SCOTTISH AFFAIRS

- 1 EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT
- 2 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
- 3 HOUSING
- 4 INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY
- 5 DEVOLUTION

## Employment and Unemployment

In 1947 there were 77,000 more Scots in employment than in 1939, which, because of the rearmament drive, was a high year for employment in Scotland. During 1947 unemployment declined considerably and was lower than in any previous peace-time year since records were first kept.

In 1933, 22 per cent of the insured population of Scotland were unemployed. In December 1947, only 3 per cent of the insured population were unemployed. Here are some comparable figures:

Date	No. of Insured Persons Registered as unemployed			Percentage of total insured population
	Males	Females	Total	
December 1933	302,296	52,887	355,183	22
July 1938	185,766	46,385	232,151	14
July 1939	137,838	33,952	171,970	10½
December 1947	38,264	14,496	52,760	3

Employment figures in some of Scotland's chief industries show substantial increases over the 1939 position. At July 1947 shipbuilding and ship repairing employed 36 per cent more than in 1939. Motor vehicles, cycles and aircraft, 70 per cent more; chemicals, 46 per cent more. The increase in glass manufacture was 24 per cent; in goods transport by road, 24 per cent; in the cotton industry, 25 per cent; in the railway service, 140 per cent; in iron and steel founding, 36 per cent; and in road passenger transport, 18 per cent.

## Industrial Development in Scotland

There are now 22 Government sponsored Industrial Estates in being or projected in central Scotland. These will provide factories covering

4,460,611 square feet, of which almost exactly 1,000,000 sq. ft. are completed and occupied and 3½ million sq. feet were under construction at the end of 1947.

In addition the building of five government financed factories was begun during 1947, with a floor space of 639,000 sq. ft. Three similar factories, 253,000 sq. ft., were completed during the year. The total figures for factory space financed by the Government at the end of 1947 were: completed, 1.2 million square feet; under construction, 4.6 million square feet.

The following table shows the number of new jobs actually provided or in the course of being provided by various categories of Government-sponsored or Government-encouraged industrial development:

	Actually provided *	Eventually to be provided †
New factories and extensions ...	13,100	74,500
Government and standard factories allocated or sold ... ...	11,870	25,500
Royal Ordnance and other used factories retained ... ... ...	8,710	11,600
Royal Ordnance and other factories converted into industrial estates	6,700	12,100
Firms housed in existing premises ...	8,000	11,000
Other employment including prewar industrial estates ... ...	6,900	11,900
<b>TOTAL</b> ... ...	<b>55,280</b>	<b>146,600</b>

\* At end of April, 1948.

† Projects approved at end of May, 1948.

In all this development it has been the deliberate policy of the Government to encourage diversification of Scottish industries so that Scotland becomes less dependent on heavy industry alone. Some of the new products now being produced or about to be produced in the Government factories in Scotland include agricultural machinery, canned fruit, household electrical appliances, prefabricated steel houses (temporary and permanent), vacuum cleaners, plastic materials, watches, clocks, aircraft repairs, lamps, pottery-making machinery, atomic research equipment, precision photographic equipment, typewriters, electric shavers, aero engines, aluminium castings, electric meters, X-ray equipment, bottling machinery, dairy machinery, ball

bearings, glassware, cycle tyres, and cotton carding. Many of these are industries new to Scotland and special preference is given to industries employing male labour.

## **Scottish Housing**

Housing in Scotland has always been a terrible tragedy. The Conservative Walter Elliott has spoken of "castles of misery" and this is certainly true of the ugly, overcrowded and expensive tenements both in town and country.

Although Scotland has not suffered war damage to anything like the same extent as England and Wales, her housing problem is even worse than theirs because the prewar position was even more terrible.

In 1938 the percentage of unfit houses in Scotland was 5 per cent, and the percentage in England and Wales was 5.8 per cent. There was no very important difference in the two countries. But England had nothing comparable to Scotland's overcrowding problem.

In 1931 the percentage of houses in Scotland of two rooms or less was 44 per cent, but only 4.6 per cent in England and Wales. According to the overcrowding survey of 1935 the percentage of overcrowded houses in Scotland was 22.6 and only 3.8 in England.

These housing figures are reflected in the health statistics of Scotland. Infant mortality is still very high—higher than in England and highest in the overcrowded areas.

In the city of Glasgow in 1934-8, the infant mortality rate was 99, the highest in Scotland. By 1944 it had fallen to 95. This was for the whole city, but when the figure is analysed according to housing conditions of the different wards, the fact is that in overcrowded Exchange Ward the rate was 154; in Townhead, 141; in Calton, 127; Mile-End, 124. But in Cathcart it was 41; Kelvinside, 51; and Camphill, 54. Compare prosperous Cathcart, with a housing density of 10 persons to the acre, and infant death rate of 41, with Gorbals, density 152 to the acre, and infant death rate 118.

In spite of the great need for houses in Scotland throughout the period 1919-39, there was a very high rate of unemployment among building workers. Writing in FORWARD in 1932, Mr. Thomas Johnston, later Secretary of State, said that in the building trade itself there were then 374,000 unemployed. In addition there were 25,456 unemployed persons in stove, grate, pipe, and general moulding. And there were 18,969 unemployed in brick and tile making. A grand total of

unemployment in building of 418,425! There were also 28,579 unemployed in the furniture-making industry. He concluded:

*. . . it is a terribly serious thing to see a persistent and a growing unemployment in an industry where the product is urgently required, where Parliament has put up the money for its purchase, and where we are stuck simply and solely because of property-owning vested interests in the local authorities.*

It was calculated that the number of houses required in Scotland in 1945 would be about half a million. This is a formidable task and so far only a beginning has been made.

In three years the total number of families rehoused is 63,201. This is an average of 64 families for every day since the Labour Government was returned. 25,157 permanent houses, 28,776 temporary houses and 9,269 other houses (conversions, requisitions, etc.) had been provided. In addition, 46,090 permanent and 2,876 temporary houses were then under construction.

In Scotland, by March 1924, i.e. in five and a half years—less than 30,000 houses were built. In less than *three* years this time, by a Labour Government, 63,201 families have been rehoused. Still, much remains to be done, and no one can yet begin to feel satisfied with the housing position in Scotland.

### Infant and Maternal Mortality in Scotland

In prewar years the infant mortality rate (i.e. the number of babies who die in their first year per 1,000 live births) was abnormally high in Scotland, and was only exceeded by one country in Europe. Labour's policy of full employment, of fair shares for all and of special consideration for expectant mothers and infants has produced substantial decreases in the number of babies who die in infancy as the following figures show:

Pre-war I.M. Rate per 1,000 live births	Postwar I.M. Rate per 1,000 births
1933 ... ... ... 81.1	1945 ... ... ... 56.2
1934 ... ... ... 77.7	1946 ... ... ... 53.8
1935 ... ... ... 76.8	1947 ... ... ... 55.8
1936 ... ... ... 82.3	1st Quarter 1948 ... 51.0
1937 ... ... ... 80.0	

The maternal mortality rate (i.e. the number of mothers who die in childbirth per 1,000 births) was 5.9 in 1933; 2.0 in 1947 and 1.5 in the 1st quarter of 1948.

## **Scottish Devolution**

Scotland has a substantial measure of devolution in the present structure of government. The Secretary of State for Scotland is the Minister responsible for

Health	Forestry	Scottish Home Affairs
Housing	Water Supply	Fisheries
Agriculture	Town and Country	Hydro-electric
Education	Planning	Development

Scottish Local Government is a complete and separate structure. The Scottish Legal system is separate and distinct from that of England and Wales. United Kingdom Ministries have senior and responsible Scottish representatives. Nationalised Industries, such as coal mining, civil aviation, railways, have each a Scottish advisory or administrative council. The Highlands and Islands Advisory Panel advises the Secretary of State on co-ordinated plans by Government Departments and Local Authorities for the best use of the resources and capacity of the Highlands and Islands. Other Advisory Bodies include the Scottish Distribution of Industry Board, the Scottish Council (Industry and Development), the Scottish Board for Industry, the Scottish Building Committee, and the Scottish Physical Planning Committee.

In 1948 important additions were made to the general machinery of Scottish Government. The powers of the Scottish Grand Committee were extended to enable the Committee (mainly composed of Scottish Members of Parliament) to debate Scottish estimates over an extended period, and a Scottish Economic Conference, consisting of representatives of Scottish Economic interests, Scottish and U.K. Government Departments and the Nationalised Industries, was set up to confer with and advise the Secretary of State (who is its Chairman) on Scottish Economic Affairs.

# WELSH AFFAIRS

1 EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

2 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

4 WELSH AGRICULTURE

5 DEVOLUTION

*Wales is a land of some two and a half million people and rather more than five million acres. It is in the hills and valleys of rural Wales that what is most characteristic of Welsh life was nurtured and still dwells, but it is to the comparatively small industrial region of the south that the fortunes of nearly two-thirds of the people have been committed.\**

## Employment and Unemployment

Between the wars, South Wales was the worst hit of the depressed areas. In Wales as a whole:

*the unemployment figure averaged 167,000 in the last 15 years before the war, that is 25.7 per cent of the insured population, and still amounted to 160,000, that is 25 per cent, even as late as 1938. (Mr. Harold Wilson. House of Commons, 26 January 1948.)*

In contrast, at June 1948, only 39,159 or 5½ per cent of the total insured were unemployed in Wales. Of the total unemployed, 27,807 were men, 10,454 were women and 898 were youths and girls under 18. Some 14,000 of those unemployed were also registered as disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act.

With the decline in the numbers without work, employment has risen to new record levels. At June 1947 (the latest date for which figures are available) the total employed in the Principality stood at 677,720 as against 597,370 at July 1939.

## Industrial Development

Practically the whole of industrial South Wales and the Wrexham Area in the north have been scheduled as Development Areas under the Distribution of Industry Act, 1945.†

\* WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE. Cmd. 7267. November 1947.

† See Section on Jobs and Earnings. Page 79.

Labour's plans to increase the volume of employment and to bring new industries to Wales include:

- (i) The extension of the Treforest Industrial Trading Estate and the construction of a new estate at Swansea.
- (ii) The conversion of the Royal Ordnance Factories at Bridgend and Hirwaun into industrial estates. Some 80 firms are already established at Bridgend with a further 35 at Hirwaun.
- (iii) The conversion to peacetime use of the Wrexham Royal Ordnance Factory at Marchwiel. Much of the space at this factory has been taken up by British Celanese Ltd., for rayon spinning and plastic manufacture.
- (iv) The retention of the three Royal Ordnance Factories at Pembrey, Glascoed and Cardiff as permanent Government establishments.
- (v) The allocation of surplus Government munition factories and storage depots to private firms. Up to 30 June 1948, space in such factories had been leased or sold to 48 firms.
- (vi) The encouragement of private factory building and extensions. The most important of these projects is at Mamhilad, near Pontypool, where British Nylon Spinners are spending some £8,000,000 on what will be the largest nylon yarn factory in Britain. At the beginning of August 1948, this factory was already employing 1,000 workers.
- (vii) The building of new factories at Government expense for letting to private firms, both for specific tenants and as advance factories with no specific tenants in view. Some 40 such factories are being built in advance of demand—mainly in areas which are relatively unattractive to industry without a factory ready for occupation. In addition, 10 special "Grenfell" factories are being built to provide employment for disabled workers, including miners suffering from pneumoconiosis and silicosis.

At 30 June 1948 approval had been given to a total of 320 projects for new factories and extensions in Wales. Of this total, 289 projects are in the South Wales and Wrexham Development Areas. The following table provides a division of these 289 projects, by number and value, together with an indication of building progress up to the end of May 1948:

Factories and Extensions Approved		Factories and Extensions Under Construction		Factories and Extensions Completed	
Number	Value £'000	No.	Value £'000	No.	Value £'000
Wrexham 9	166	3	112	4	34
South Wales 280	36,594	138	23,783	96	4,768

At the end of June 1948, nearly 9,500 new jobs had been provided by new factory buildings and extensions in the two areas. Another 1,250 workers were employed at the end of March 1948 by firms occupying temporary premises pending the completion of new buildings. Surplus Government factories allocated or sold or converted into industrial estates for peacetime uses (see (ii), (iii), and (v) above) were employing a further 25,800 workers in June, of whom 4,200 were in South Wales and 1,600 were in the Wrexham area. The latest available figure for the prewar trading estates, including Treforest trading estates relates to December 1947 when about 16,000 workers were employed.

### Local Government Finance\*

For many years, local authorities in Wales have been debarred by sheer lack of money from providing sorely-needed houses and better social services. It was just in those places where conditions were at their worst that grinding poverty prevented any improvement. Now, in contrast, the system of equalisation grants provided by Labour's 1948 Local Government Act is proving of inestimable value to many Welsh authorities. Evidence of this is provided by the RETURN OF RATES OF SELECTED AUTHORITIES, published by the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants. An analysis of 35 returns from Welsh authorities shows that 29 were able to effect reductions in rate demands for 1948-9 (as compared with 1947-8), five reported no change, and only one showed an increase. Yet services have been expanded and costs have risen. The following were among the authorities enabled to make substantial reductions:

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\* See also section on Local Government. Page 27.

Authority	1947-8 Rate	1948-9 Rate	Reduction
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bedwclly U.D.C. ...	30 0	20 0	10 0
Pontypridd U.D.C. ...	26 6	18 0	8 6
Tredegar U.D.C. ...	30 0	21 6	8 6
Gellygaer U.D.C. ...	29 0	21 2	7 10
Pontypool U.D.C. ...	21 7	13 10	7 9
Aberdare U.D.C. ...	25 0	17 6	7 6
Llwchwr U.D.C. ...	21 4	14 0	7 4
Abergavenny B.C. ...	27 0	19 11	7 1
Ebbw Vale U.D.C. ...	25 6	18 6	7 0
Rhondda U.D.C. ...	27 0	20 0	7 0
Barry B.C. ... ...	21 6	15 0	6 6
Neath B.C. ... ...	20 6	14 8	5 10
Merthyr Tydfil C.B....	30 0	24 6	5 6

## Welsh Agriculture

In rural Wales repose the most vital wellsprings of Welsh life and culture. Yet, for generations, the Welsh countryside suffered grievous neglect at the hands of successive Tory and Liberal Governments. Between the wars, poverty and hardship were the common lot of the rural, no less than the industrial, community. Agricultural wages fell to a low level. Countless thousands, among them the most virile elements in the population, left the land for urban areas within and without the Principality.

After three years of Labour Government, Welsh agriculture looks to the future with hope and confidence. The Agriculture Act of 1947 provides a firm foundation based on guaranteed prices and assured markets for the principal farm products. The farm worker now enjoys a legally guaranteed minimum wage of 90s. a week for 48 hours, as against 35s. for a working week of 52 hours or more in 1939.†

The Hill Farming Act 1946 is of special importance to Wales. It provides grants up to one half of the cost of improving hill farms by

† See also section on Agriculture. Page 121.

the building of new cottages and the reconditioning of existing farm houses and cottages. Grants in aid are also available for the installation of private electricity plants and for the improvement of farm roads and bridges, fences and ditches. The Act also continues the hill sheep and cattle subsidies on a permanent footing. Subsidy payments made up to 30 June 1947 in respect of the years 1945 and 1946, totalled £416,900 for hill cattle, and £868,300 for hill sheep.

## **Welsh Devolution**

Labour has done more than any previous Government to meet the deep and widespread desire of the Welsh people that Wales be treated as an administratively distinct region. The Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture have separate and distinct Welsh departments, while all the other important Ministries have delegated maximum responsibility to offices in Wales. Every effort is made to secure the maximum co-ordination between departments on Welsh affairs. There is, at both Cardiff and Whitehall, a constant exchange of information on matters of mutual interest. Over the last two years, the links between the various Ministries have been reinforced by quarterly Conferences of the Heads of all Welsh Offices and Departments, meeting at Cardiff.

Since 1946, industrial, cultural and social problems and progress in the Principality have been reviewed in a new series of annual White Papers, and Parliamentary time has been specifically set aside for the discussion of Welsh affairs.

Labour, moreover, seeks to do everything possible to enable the Welsh nation to develop its unique cultural and educational heritage on fully autonomous lines. Witness of this fact is the proposal to establish a Joint Education Committee for Wales and Monmouthshire, as recommended by the Working Party,\* appointed by Miss Ellen Wilkinson in December 1946. The new Committee will consist of representatives of all the education authorities in Wales and Monmouthshire, the University of Wales, teachers, employers and trade unions.

As recommended by the Working Party, the Committee's functions will include responsibility for secondary school examinations, for the development of adult education and the establishment of a Welsh National College of the Arts. It will also be asked to advise on religious instruction, to assume general responsibility for vocational guidance, and to "review the curriculum of Welsh schools with aim of conserving and developing the best traditions of Wales."

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\* EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN WALES. Report of the Working Party February 1948. H.M.S.O., price 1s. 3d.

# PARLIAMENT AND PEOPLE

1 THE PARLIAMENT BILL

2 REPRESENTATION OF THE  
PEOPLE

Two important measures affecting Parliament were introduced by the Labour Government during the 1947-8 Session. These were the Parliament Bill and the Representation of the People Act.

## The Parliament Bill

The purpose of the *Parliament Bill* (which passed its Second Reading on 11 November 1947 by 345 votes to 194) is to reduce the period for which the House of Lords may delay the passage of Bills approved by the Commons. It provides that, in future, such legislation may be passed into law despite opposition in the Lords, so long as those measures have been agreed to by the House of Commons in two successive Sessions, instead of three as laid down in the Parliament Act of 1911.

When the proposed Bill was first debated (that is, on the Motion for the Address early in the Session) Mr. Herbert Morrison argued that its introduction was a question of *avoiding* rather than of precipitating a constitutional crisis. He went on to say that at no time should the Lords be in a position to determine when, or on what issue, a General Election should take place.

Moving the Second Reading on 10 November, Mr. Morrison claimed it was grossly unfair that under the existing law of the constitution a Tory Administration was certain to have no trouble with the House of Lords, whereas a progressive Government was likely to run into difficulties at any time after the expiration of its second year in power. He asserted, and rightly so remembering the Party's General Election Manifesto of 1945, that the Government had a mandate to take the necessary steps to counter any obstruction by the House of Lords. The issue was not one of principle, but of degree, of fair judgment and of practical efficiency.

Opposition speakers were most critical and charged the Government with the introduction of a Bill for which there was no mandate, no

justification and no public demand. Mr. Churchill called the measure a means for devising dodges to keep the Government in office while it arrogantly thwarted the will of the people. Yet, in 1909, this same Churchill said :

*When you hear it said that all the House of Lords wish to do is to ascertain the true will of the people, do not be deceived by that. You will find, I expect, nothing they will like less.*

The Prime Minister, replying to the Second Reading debate, reiterated that the Government, by bringing in the Bill, had tried to prevent not precipitate constitutional difficulties. He denied that the Lords were qualified in any way to interpret public opinion. And while the Government were prepared to look at any proposal for reform, it was essential that the Lords should be left with no overriding powers over the Commons. If a revising Chamber were needed, it might well require some period for delaying legislation to enable it to look closely at details, but it should not possess concurrent powers with the elected Chamber.

This point was driven home by the Home Secretary, Mr. Chuter Ede:

*We want it to be clearly understood that any attempt on the part of another place to obstruct us in carrying through that programme laid before the country before the General Election of 1945 will be dealt with under the proposals of this Bill. This country enjoys a settled Government which is a great asset in the present troubled state of the world, but one of the things that democracy has to prove is that it can, with speed and certainty, deal with needed reforms that have to be considered by the Parliamentary machine. . . .”*

Mr Morrison also emphasised that the case for the Bill rested on the belief of the Government that they had the right by suitable legislation, to make such provision as would enable

*the policy on which we were elected by the people in 1945 to be carried out, in this Parliament. . . .*

During the Bill's Second Reading in the Lords, the Opposition asked for a Conference of Party Leaders on the issues raised by the Bill, and at a later date Lord Addison indicated that the Government were willing to enter into negotiations on the understanding that, so far as discussions of the powers of the Second Chamber were concerned, these should be limited to ensuring reasonable time for the consideration of measures by the Lords, and for the discussion of differences between the two Houses. Lord Addison also indicated that the Bill should either be passed or rejected by the Lords before the end of

the Session; and so far as the composition of the House was concerned:

- (1) there would be conversations on the possibility of there being established a basis for further discussion;
- (2) in the event of such a basis being agreed, the political Parties would examine the same with their own Members; and
- (3) the preliminary discussions would be private and confined to a small number of leading Members of the Parties concerned.

The Tory Leader, Lord Salisbury, had misgivings on these conditions. He contended that they eliminated from the proposed discussions consideration of the power of delay which, in his opinion, was necessary to enable public opinion to crystallise at times when the two Houses of Parliament disagreed. The Conservative Peers attached cardinal importance to the power of delay and could not surrender it in advance. For the Government, Lord Hall said they had gone a long way to lay the basis of a compromise. And while it was to be hoped a successful Conference would emerge, it had to be made clear that the Government must claim that the supreme interpreters of the will of the public in Parliament were the directly elected representatives of the people.

On 4 February, Lord Addison intimated to the Lords that the Government had offered an alternative to their original proposals. The Government was willing to enter discussions on the issues raised on the understanding that consideration of the powers of the Second Chamber should be limited to ensuring reasonable time for the due performance of the functions of that Chamber. The Opposition, both Tory and Liberal, welcomed the Minister's statement.

Informal discussions between the Party Leaders in both Houses on the future of the Lords accordingly took place. On 4 May an agreed statement on the talks was issued as a White Paper (Cmd.7380). From this it appeared that the three political parties were agreed on the need for maintaining the House of Lords as part of the legislature. There was disagreement, however, about the maximum period of delay on public Bills to be allowed the Lords. The Government had offered to consider a period of nine months from the Third Reading of a measure in the Commons, should that be longer than twelve months from Second Reading. The Tories indicated that they might accept eighteen months from Second Reading and would consider twelve months from Third Reading. It was found impossible to secure agreement on this issue.

Any further concessions by the Government would have imperilled not only measures passed by the Commons in the last year of its life,

but also bills dealt with in the Fourth Session. A Special Session of Parliament was summoned for 14 September to enable the Parliament Bill again to be passed by the Commons in order that, under the powers of the Act of 1911, it may receive the Royal Assent when it has been introduced and passed by the Commons for a third time.

The Government's case for the Bill cannot be challenged. A retention of the existing delaying powers by the House of Lords means that the later years in the life of any progressive Government, such as ours, must be at the mercy of an institution which is over-weighted in the interests of Tory reaction.

## **Representation of the People Act**

The second measure of importance, namely the *Representation of the People Act* is now on the Statute Book. It was brought in to consolidate certain aspects of election law, implementing the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Electoral Reform, as well as re-drawing the Parliamentary Boundaries.

The Bill was read a second time on 17 February 1948 by 318 votes to 6, the Liberals forming the hostile opposition because the measure carried no provision for proportional representation, and the Tories abstaining.

The measure gives effect, at long last, to the principle of "one man, one vote." In future electors in Parliamentary elections will have *one qualification only*, that of residence. Abolition of plural and business premises votes means the abolition of the University seats and an end to that anomaly—the two-Membered City of London division which only shows a residential vote of 4,600.

Further sections of the bill cover the twice-yearly publication of registers of electors; a proposal to reduce expenses of Parliamentary elections; while minor reforms deal with return of deposits, conduct of both Parliamentary and local government elections, election of parish councillors by ballot, and so on.

One important departure from past practice is the arrangement for spring elections for local authorities: the date for County Council elections will be future be in April and all other local elections will be held in May.

In moving the Second Reading, Mr. Chuter Ede claimed that it completed the progress towards a full and complete democracy:

*This Bill wipes out the last of the privileges that have been retained by special classes in the franchise of this country.*

From the Tory Front Bench, Mr. Churchill made an attack upon the Bill and stated that his Party could not accept, as a permanent settlement, the abolition of the City of London division or the abolition of the University franchise.

On the Report stage of the Bill a Government new Clause was brought in to limit the use of motor cars at Parliamentary elections. It provides that cars used at the polls must be registered with the Returning Officer and that the number used by any one candidate must not exceed one for every 1,500 electors in county divisions and one for every 2,500 votes in borough constituencies. The Clause was added to the Bill and brings to an end a long-standing source of grievance to many Labour Parliamentary candidates.

The Bill was read a third time on 23 June by 338 votes to 193, the Opposition moving a reasoned Amendment on the grounds that the Bill repudiated the agreed recommendations of the 1944 Speaker's Conference, and disregarded, for Party advantage, the findings of the Boundary Commissioners on the question of new seats.

*We hold ourselves perfectly free, said Mr. Churchill, so far as the next Parliament is concerned to repair and redress the injuries and breaches which this Bill contains. For example, should we gain a majority, we shall immediately introduce a Bill to restore University representation. . . . There is nothing like putting it plainly.*

Replying to the debate, Mr. Herbert Morrison described this Tory pledge as

*well worthy of the reactionary tendencies that have characterised the political life of the right hon. gentleman over many years.*

The Lord President resisted Tory charges that the Government had broken its word in not basing its proposals entirely on the Conference Agreement of 1944, arrived at during the days of the Coalition Government. On this point, Mr. Morrison said that it would have been

*constitutionally monstrous if we had sought to commit an entirely different Labour Party Government and an entirely different House of Commons. I entirely repudiate, with sincerity and with conviction and with indignation these allegations of dishonour and bad faith.*

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THE UNITED NATIONS

3 BRITAIN AND EUROPE

## **Commonwealth and Empire**

(i) *Advance to Freedom.* In all the areas under our control we have abolished the old type of capitalist imperialism and replaced it by a system of friendly co-operation. Wherever the local population has already reached a stage in political development where it is capable of administering its own affairs, we have handed over power completely. Burma has been allowed to leave the British Commonwealth entirely. The Indian continent has been assisted in creating two independent Dominions of India and Pakistan, both of which remain free to leave the Commonwealth if they so desire. The fact that they have not done so has introduced the highest contribution to the new spirit of friendship which Labour policy has brought about.

The Tories, particularly Churchill, have never ceased to cry "Woe, woe, catastrophe" at every move to fulfil our pledges of self-government to those people of the Empire ripe for it. According to Churchill in his Luton Hoo speech (later described by the Prime Minister as "Luton Hooey"), the Government

*threw themselves with zeal and gusto into the task of demolishing our long built up and splendid structure in the East.*

In fact the two free dominions of India and Pakistan are now proving a source of strength to the Empire instead of a vast liability as a discontented and rebellious subject people.

In the same speech Churchill said of India:

*We must now expect an indefinite epoch of internecine and religious strife. Internal administration in some areas is completely collapsing.*

Sardar Patel, deputy-Premier of India, characterised this speech as "venomous and mischievous," and Shanmukham Chetty, Indian Minister of Finance then visiting London, bluntly called it "an outrage." It is this sort of irresponsible, destructive talk which is likely to disrupt the Empire, not the constructive and democratic

policies of the Government, whose success were epitomised in India by the cordial relations maintained between Lord Mountbatten and the New India up to his departure. Pandit Nehru in a farewell speech of quite extraordinary warmth said of him:

*. . . He will be remembered by the people of India with affection as one who co-operated in the great task of building a free India.*

Constitutional advance has been seen in British Colonies all over the world from Ceylon to the West Indies. Conservatives who describe these achievements as "scuttling the Empire" might well consider the consequences which a less progressive policy has already brought upon Holland and France. In Indo-China the French Government is still spending millions of francs in an attempt to force the local inhabitants to accept the old type of imperial control.

(ii) *The Plans for Prosperity.* In the Colonies, Labour Britain has given a tremendous impetus to social and economic progress. Under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme £120 million is given to Colonial Governments to assist local planning. In addition the Colonial Development Corporation, with a capital of £110 million, has been established to finance special projects of large-scale economic development. Further still the Overseas Food Corporation is empowered to spend £55 million on great plans for increasing food production in the Colonies. Even Beaverbrook has welcomed these schemes and admitted that the Labour Government has done more for the Commonwealth than the Tories ever did with all their phrase-mongering.

Said the DAILY EXPRESS in its leader of 26 February 1948 on the African groundnuts scheme:

*The Tories are jealous of the Socialists for stealing the Empire initiative. . . . The Government's reaction should be a fiercer determination to make it succeed. For this is much more than a piece of shining armour to wear against the Tories, more than a dodge for winning elections. It is a fine imaginative project, way up above politics. It calls for an intense concentration of energy and a sustained drive throughout 1948.*

That is exactly what John Strachey is giving to it.

The MANCHESTER GUARDIAN on 26 June, writing in glowing terms of the Colonial Development Plan said :

*In a sense it is Beaverbrook's old dream come true, but with this difference: we do not want to make a British enclave serving our exclusive benefit, and we are creating stronger links than those of Imperial Preference.*

The Government is in fact developing the vast resources of the Colonies with much wider aims than merely solving Britain's food problem, though this will be achieved as well. Their plans were made in fact well before our food and dollar crisis became evident. It sets out (1) to counteract the growing world food shortage, about which Sir John Boyd Orr has recently warned us so forcefully; (2) to help British and European reconstruction by providing raw materials from sterling sources, thus helping to offset Europe's overall dollar shortage; (3) last but by no means least, to benefit the Colonial peoples themselves by introducing all the technical skill, scientific knowledge and industrial experience of Britain and thus raising their whole standard of living. It is hoped moreover that political development (particularly Trades Unions) and social services (particularly education and medicine) will go hand in hand with agricultural and industrial advance, so that the whole programme of colonial development will become a vast co-operative enterprise. As the *NEWS CHRONICLE* said on 26 June 1948:

*Jokes about the British Empire which were once fashionable at Left Wing gatherings are now as out of date as some of Mr. Churchill's hats. The Labour Government's Colonial record has been a good one and it was carried a stage further by Mr. Creech Jones when he announced the Government's proposal to set up a Colonial Development Board.*

Imperialism is dead, but the Empire has been given new life. Socialist planning is developing it not for personal profit, but for the Common Weal.

## The United Nations

The Labour Government is determined to do everything possible to replace the anarchy of power politics by an international rule of law. So in every field it has fully supported collective action through the United Nations and other international organisations. British pertinacity was mainly responsible for establishing the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the International Refugee Organisation against American reluctance and Russian indifference, and more recently for setting up the Economic Commission for Europe. For as Socialists we recognise the economic interdependence of all nations; Ernest Bevin has continually stressed the fact that inequalities between the standards of living of nations in any area are a menace to world peace.

We have fought, and are still fighting, for an effective disarmament plan, and even under the greatest provocation we have preferred international arbitration to direct action. Any previous British government would have responded to the mining of British destroyers

by Albania with a summary bombardment. We took the case to the Security Council, and when, as so often before, the verdict favourable to us was vetoed by Russia, we still sought an international solution and transferred the case to the International Court. For we believe that, whatever the suspicions and fears which still bedevil world politics, the experience of co-operation for practical purposes inside international institutions will teach the powers to grow together in peace.

The case of Palestine is a good example. When we held the Mandate in the United Nations we constantly refused to use our own troops for enforcing a solution of the problem which was unacceptable either to the Arabs or the Jews. After two years' continuous effort to find an acceptable solution, we referred the problem to the United Nations. But when the United Nations Assembly voted for a solution which all the Arabs opposed, we surrendered the Mandate and withdrew our troops rather than accept the sole responsibility for enforcing this solution.

### **Britain and Europe**

Under the Labour Government Britain has played a leading part in organising the free nations of Europe in a collective effort for their own recovery. It was Ernest Bevin's prompt and vigorous response to Mr. Marshall's suggestion at Harvard on 5 June 1947 which led to the formation of the Council for European Economic Recovery. This Council worked out a Plan for Europe, which, after many changes and vicissitudes, finally emerged in July 1948 as the European Recovery Programme, or, as it is more commonly called, the Marshall Plan.

On 16 April at the opening session of the permanent Organisation for European Economic Co-operation in Paris, M. Bidault thanked Mr. Bevin on behalf of the other delegates for the great work he had done in promoting European unity.

Thanks to the far-sighted statesmanship of Mr. Marshall, the generosity of the American people and the initiative of the British Government, the purely economic problem of Europe seems solved for the next four years : and if the plan works as intended it should be solved permanently as the whole purpose of the programme is to transcend mere relief and make Britain and Europe economically strong and self-supporting once again by 1952.

But alongside the purely economic plans, and essential to their ultimate success, there is the political problem of organising a European group which is strong enough to resist external pressures (at present

being exerted exclusively from the East) and build up a politically and economically viable Third Force, which will be independent of both Russia and America and in fact hold the balance between them. Here again Ernest Bevin took the lead, first with his famous "Western Union" speech of 22 January 1948, and later with the Treaty of Brussels which, largely as a result of his efforts, set up the "Council of the Five," which forms the nucleus of Western Union, consisting of Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. Under this Treaty common plans are laid for financial policy, defence programmes and colonial development. When these plans begin to bear fruit, it is hoped that the obvious advantages will persuade other Western European countries to join in, and later to extend it to the Commonwealth including Canada.

It is no fault of ours that the countries of Eastern Europe are not included in these collective plans for European recovery. They were all invited to take part originally, including Russia. But Russia refused all collaboration and ordered her satellites to do the same, although some had already accepted the invitation. It was not only that Russia was afraid of losing her economic hold, if they joined in : it was even more that she simply could not afford to have Eastern Europe "perverted" by permanent contact with the free air and democratic institutions of the West.

The British Government has persistently striven to avoid a division of Europe into two, and has always stressed the interdependence of all Europe and the necessity, both for East and West, of working together under the Recovery Programme. But Russia has declared war on all collaboration and particularly on the Marshall Plan, which it hysterically denounces on every possible occasion as a diabolical instrument of American imperialism. These attacks have not halted the programme in the least : if anything they have speeded it up by strengthening the resolve of the free nations of the West to work together and make it succeed. The only result of Soviet policy is to harm the countries of Eastern Europe and to demonstrate to the world that the most rigid and oppressive imperialism today is in the Soviet "sphere of influence" and that the Iron Curtain is definitely "Made in Russia."

## APPENDIX I

# ADVICE TO NEW SPEAKERS

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A common fault of new speakers is to write up a speech or notes in a sort of essay form. This puts an extra strain on the speaker because so much depends on the memorisation of the sentences to preserve the texture of the exposition, and any failure to remember the wording may cause serious hesitations when delivering the speech or even cause a breakdown through a blackout of the mind.

### **"The Island Method"**

Probably the most useful way of preparing a speech is to adopt the "Island Method" of setting out the matter. You divide a speech into parts, as choice may be, for each island. This is not a mere dividing of your speech under headings, it is essentially the apportioning of a little speech to each island. In a short speech you might have, say, four islands and you have a clear idea of the simple subject or point of each. In the case of a full address you would have a series of groups of islands, each group under a major division of the theme of the address. This may seem formidable, but it is not really so. If you have a group of six islands you know the group subject, and you have a little script for each island. You start on the first island, then jump to island two, and so on. If by chance you falter or dry up on an island you pass to the next one and get a fresh lease for yourself.

Three main advantages of the island system are (1) The strain of nervousness and memory is much reduced, because concern is limited to the subject of each island and if the mind is stored with some information even if you forget parts of your prepared notes, you can improvise and carry on for a time, and then make a fresh start on another island. (2) The change from island to island induces a change of attitude, mood and gesture, and thus adds variety to the delivery. (3) It compels you to a more pointed exposition of your matter as well as prompting you to deliver your speech as a series of easily followed and separate but connected expositions which cumulatively leave a clear impression of the address with the audience.

Your speech should have a theme which has a beginning, a middle and an end. It should tell a story. It should not be a mere compilation of arguments and facts. You must get the idea of *the story you want*

*to get across to the audience*, very clearly and firmly in your mind. You can then weave in your facts and arguments to build up the story.

In this book the portions on the various subjects comprise factual items and quotations which make up a solid basis of information on each subject. If you were preparing a speech on Health, it might be assumed you would make a selective synopsis of the five parts into which it is divided. This synopsis would be general or detailed to serve your individual purpose of securing a basal layout for your speech. You would have already decided whether your address was to be a general informative one on public health, or to give an outline of the service or whether it was to stress the social enterprise of Labour, in contrast with Tory ineptitude, in creating this great service.

*Your story for the audience* would be determined by such choice of theme. You would proceed to work on your layout, rearranging and recasting it as necessary. You would then desire to elaborate some parts from your own or further reading. You would want to personalise or dramatise certain aspects by drawing upon personal experiences known to you or recorded in memoranda or books you can consult. You would keep in mind the island method of arrangement of your speech and your notes would be of a direct and pointed character and not of an essay type. All this may be straightforward for you if you have already some knowledge of the subject, but if at the moment your ideas and facts are unassorted and nebulous you may feel somewhat abashed.

## Making a Start

Very often a new speaker experiences a blankness when sitting down to prepare a speech, even with a layout before him. You have to break through this numbness and the easiest way is to write a few sentences, however commonplace they may seem, for one of the islands as one or two ordinary thoughts come into the mind. The point is *you have made a start* and you can allow your mind to ruminate on the subject as you go about your everyday affairs. Something will open out on some points and you can then write up more matter for various islands.

Naturally at this time you will be consulting books, pamphlets and newspapers for information and ideas. You will no doubt be taking notes and listing appropriate statistics. Do not be dismayed if your collection of information seems to be very prosaic and commonplace; it will turn out better than you think. Mould it to the general theme or

story you want to get across to the audience and you will find it makes to a presentable narrative and case.

Any statistics you propose to use should be very carefully and circumspectly set out in such manner as an audience can readily take in and appreciate. Hearers at a public meeting are not students taking notes so if possible give the figures in round numbers and personalise them as much as possible. It is not desirable for instance to talk pedantically about twelve point seven per cent when evoking sympathy about babies, it is far better to personalise the figures as twelve or thirteen babies in every hundred are so and so. In the first statement the hearers merely receive the facts as dull statistics, whereas through the second statement the minds grasp it as human fact.

An important technique for you is this. Make assertions and then advance facts or arguments in support of them. Do not argue up to a conclusion, it is too risky and the attention of the people will waver. This latter technique is suitable for a writer, but not for a speaker. Having heard the assertion, made no doubt with emphasis, the audience will be interested to hear your facts or information in support or proof of it.

You should always try to make your arguments and statements reach to an intimacy within the personal experience or apprehension of the audience. This is important. In preparing your speech you should ask yourself why you are saying these things to the people, and having a reason in mind you must tell them this reason or make it apparent again and again if necessary. This is especially the case when dealing with subjects like finance or economics.

Then there is the question as to whether you are saying what you really mean or want to say. It is so easy to wrap up a thought in a luxuriant whirl of words, and often the point is not there or is so clouded as to be ineffective. So in preparing your notes, pull up occasionally and test them by asking—does it say it?

Always then, review your notes and ask:

- (1) Am I making clear to the audience why I am saying these things to them.
- (2) Does what I have written actually say what I really meant to say.

### Filing Your Material

It is a good habit to carry a notebook, a loose leaf one, and jot down facts or ideas that arrest attention from day to day. Facts and ideas

present themselves, they come quickly but they vanish more quickly. If you jot them down at once they are captured and fixed.

The collection of information and statistics from journals and newspapers is adopted by almost every speaker, but in practice the scheme often lapses because it is troublesome to keep the cuttings in order. If you choose a simple method there is a chance of persisting in it. Speakers who have elaborately indexed and filed cuttings and notes, say it takes an unconscionable time and care to keep the subdivisions and cross-referencing up to date. Perhaps the simplest way is to have a series of large envelopes boldly marked with the subjects Education, Industry, Europe, America, International, Finance, Social Welfare, Socialism, etc. Subdivisions can be ignored at first, but could be developed for any subjects you are specially interested in.

Pamphlets can be filed in groups in cardboard boxes, or drawers.

Files of journals are often kept. You should mark boldly on the front covers references to any articles of particular value. An index card of special articles in a serial set of journals is often of great help in saving rummaging through them.

Notes and extracts can be filed in appropriate envelopes as above, or entered or pasted in a subject-indexed scrap or loose leaf book, or in a card index. Both methods can be used simultaneously, the book being used for long extracts and the card index for short notes.

In your reading of your own books it is essential to indicate in some way salient passages which may be useful. A ready way is to mark such passages boldly in pencil. On glancing at such a marked book later you can quickly track down appropriate selections. Some speakers content themselves by pencilling page numbers at the front or end of the book, but this can prove a tedious sort of reference when having to be used at a later date. Other speakers turn down the leaves of pages which have important points. If you append a short estimate of a book immediately on finishing its perusal you will often find it of helpful value later.

You will find it of great advantage to choose a size of paper for your manuscripts of speeches, and use it for all your speeches. You can then readily interchange portions of speeches for use on particular occasions. You will also tend to file all your speeches together, whereas if they are of different sizes or on various odd sheets they are apt to be stowed away indiscriminately and often mislaid when wanted. A further benefit is that when you have a new speech to prepare you find it most helpful to glance through previous speeches for thoughts and sugges-

tions and phrasings. When your manuscripts are of the same size and filed together this is an easy task but if you have to delve into oddments of notes it can be a tantalising business.

## **Attitudes and Gestures**

Assume an easy attitude on the platform. Stand upright on both feet in a comfortable position for yourself. If you are conscious of your hands clasp them lightly in front. Then the easiness will cause you to loosen the hands occasionally in a gentle gesture in moments of animation of speech. If you stand grasping the edges of a table or chair you are likely to stiffen the body and induce a rigidity of attitude and delivery which can become monotonous for the audience.

Fumbling with a watch chain or buttons or spectacles is an irritating fault. Keeping the hands in the pockets for stretches of time really gives an impression of casualness or awkwardness which detracts from the full effect of a speaker's matter or delivery.

Gesture is important, the natural wave of a hand and arm or the lighting up of the countenance add quality and appeal to delivery. Faults to be avoided are grimaces and excitable movements. One can let oneself go without spoiling the force of appeal by a riot of physical contortions and extravagant emphasis. Keep gesture within bounds. The speaker who uses sledgehammer effects of banging the table or hands every other sentence produces a monotony which is as wearying as the droning of a dull speaker. If you find yourself gabbling your sentences, due to some overstrain, pull up at once, pause, and start again in a lower tone of voice.

When starting to speak, pitch your voice towards the back of the audience, this will enable all the people to hear you. Do not look down, or over the heads of the audience while speaking. Address yourself to all the people present, regard them as friends, it will create a rapprochement between the people and yourself and there will be reciprocal response which will stimulate you to your best endeavour.

H.C.

## APPENDIX II

### Bibliography

The following is a list of the more important books, pamphlets and reports, of interest and value to Labour Party members, published during the last two years. The prices given for Labour Party, T.U.C. and H.M. Stationery Office publications are all post free.

The attention of readers is drawn also to the list on Socialism published by the National Book League. Compiled and sponsored by the Labour Party Research Department, it is intended as a guide to the main books which incorporate Socialist thought whether it be on general principles or on particular aspects of economic and social organisation. Copies of this book list (No. 38) may be obtained, price 1s., from the National Book League, 7 Albemarle Street, London, W.1.

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*Guide to Post-War Housing Policy.* Jean Copeland. (Labour Party, 7d.).  
*Appearance of Housing Estates.* Report. (H.M.S.O. 7d.).  
*Estimating Housing Needs.* Alexander Block. (The Architectural Press 10s. 6d.).  
*Housing Before the War and After.* M. J. Elsas. 2nd Edition. (Staples Press, 7s. 6d.).  
*Landlord and Tenant.* R. Borregaard. (Stevens & Sons, 4s.).  
*The Rent Acts.* R. E. Megarry. (Stevens & Sons, 10s. 6d.).  
*Housing Administration.* Stewart Swift. Third Edition. (Butterworth and Company, 35s.).  
*Fourth Report of the Rural Housing Sub-Committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee, on the Reconditioning of Rural Housing.* 1947. (H.M.S.O., 9d.).  
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#### Town and Country Planning

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*The Development of Local Government.* W. A. Robson. (Allen and Unwin, 18s.).  
*Local Government Reform.* (Labour Party, 3d.).  
*The English Local Government System.* J. H. Warren. (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.).  
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*Local Government of the United Kingdom.* J. J. Clarke. 13th Edition, 1946. (Pitman, 25s.).  
*Hart's Introduction to the Law of Local Government and Administration.* Edited by D. J. Beattie. 3rd Edition, 1946. (Butterworth, 25s.).  
*Return of Rates (England and Wales), 1948-49.* (Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, 5s.).  
*Rates and Rateable Values in England and Wales.* 1947-48. (H.M.S.O., 1s. 3d.).  
*Local Government Handbook, 1946-7.* (England and Wales.) (Labour Party, 1s. 6d.).  
*Supplement to the Local Government Handbook, 1947-8.* (Labour Party, 6d.).  
*Local and Regional Government.* G. D. H. Cole. 1947. (Cassell, 15s.).  
*Local Government Boundary Commission.* Report for 1947. (H.M.S.O., 1s. 2d.). (Report for 1946, 4d.).  
*Report of the Ministry of Health for the Year Ended 31st March, 1947.* Cmd. 7441. (H.M.S.O., 3s. 9d.).  
*Conduct of Local Elections.* Harold Croft. (Labour Party, 1s. 3d.).

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